

**The Micropolitics of Community Supported Agriculture:  
Connection, Discourses, and Subjects**

Michelle Ryan

Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctorate in Philosophy in Sociology

The School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies  
University of Ottawa

© Michelle Ryan, Ottawa, Canada, 2024

**Acknowledgements**

Thank you to the farmers and members who shared their experiences and reflections so generously.

Thank you to Professor Kelly Bronson for your collegial and constructive supervision. Thank you to my committee members, Professors Claud Denis, Marie-Josée Massicotte, and Nathan Young, and my external examiner, Dr. Phil Mount, for your generous and generative feedback. You have all made my thesis and my writing stronger. Thank you all for your guidance.

I am grateful to my colleagues. From commiserating about how to do academia and parenting, to babysitting while I TA, and being generous with your encouragement, I am indebted to you. Thank you, Chantal, Anke, Jésaël, Shannon, Nima, Tanya, Hamdi, Maria, Gilbert, and Victoria.

Thank you, Chris, for showing me in a million loads of laundry, in thousands of carrots peeled, that feminism is a daily practice rather than a theoretical abstraction. Thank you, Aunt Vicki and Uncle Nick, Catherine, Thomas, and Thunder for your encouragement and support.

**Abstract**

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a system whereby members purchase shares in a farm in the spring and then receive produce (maple syrup, meat, honey, vegetables, fruit, etc.) over the course of the growing season. The significance of this system is contested with critics, chiefly sociologist Julie Guthman (2008), asserting that CSA reproduces neoliberalism. Guthman's thesis on the relationship between practices, subjectivities, and political imaginaries is generative. My intervention is predominantly methodological. Guthman offers a systemic overview, in keeping with Michel Foucault's scholarship on governmentality, but does not explore the embodied nature of governmentality at the scale of the people involved. I contend that to understand how neoliberal governmentality plays out in CSA, we need to explore embodied practices at the scale of the people involved. I rely on Dorothy Smith's agent perspective and examine the practices associated with CSA for a discursive reading of those practices. My discursive reading employs J.K. Gibson-Graham's diverse economies approach. Participation in CSA cultivates a sense of connection to a local geographic community, and a community of practice, contrary to the seemingly individualized nature of the market transactions which form the basis of CSA. This sense of connection is supportive of prefigurative practices, farming practices, and activism. The relationality experienced by CSA farmers and members undergirds political activism, and the connection to communities of practice galvanizes and supports both discursive and protest practices. Attention to discourse at the scale of the individual provides insight into how discourses are co-produced and allows us to observe discourses in various stages of development, from those just entering the public square on social media, to those further developed, conceptually rich, with saliency for both farmers and members, and linked to political protest. The communities that exist in opposition to the individualization of neoliberalism, the production of discourse that both resists and reinscribes neoliberalism, and the practices that shape our subjects and political imaginaries, visible at this scale, provide insight into the connection between local and global discourses, and the connection between everyday practices and protest.

Contents

Acknowledgements .....ii

Abstract.....iii

Chapter 1: Introduction.....1

    What is Community Supported Agriculture?.....3

    Background: building a theoretical tool to study CSA participation.....7

    Shifting scales bears fruit.....11

    Outline.....13

Chapter 2: Literature Review.....14

    Agro-food scholarship on CSA.....14

    Neoliberalism and the Making of Food Politics in California .....28

    Limitations of the Concepts of Neoliberalism and Neoliberal Governmentality.....35

Chapter 3: Theoretical Toolkit .....50

    Foucault’s Governmentality.....51

    Situated Agents.....67

    Materialist Ontology.....73

    Practices.....80

    Reading for Difference.....88

    Methods.....94

Chapter 4: Practices - Doing the Discourse.....102

    Teaching Practices.....102

        Explaining practices to others .....105

        Education and Skills.....109

        Parenting.....111

    Relational practices.....117

        Getting Started: Making the switch and doing the research.....124

        Reducing Food Waste.....127

    Food Practices .....129

        Food Procurement and Preparation.....129

        Contextualized Cooking.....132

    Health Practices.....138

    Complementary Sustainability Practices.....141

    Farming Practices.....146

        Environmental Practices.....146

        Growing the Vegetables and Raising the Meat.....152

        Planning and Bookkeeping.....156

    Coping Practices.....158

        Joy and Pleasure.....158

        Balance and Self-Care.....162

    Social Movement Practices.....165

Practices Summary.....	172
Chapter 5: How people talk about what they do, meta commentary.....	176
Sustainable Labour Conditions.....	178
Support for Farmers: Food Security and Prefigurative Practices.....	181
The Environment.....	187
Good Food.....	191
Health.....	193
Community.....	197
Boycotting.....	202
Parenting.....	207
Ethical Meat and Vegetarianism.....	209
Commentary Summary.....	211
Chapter 6: Evaluation Practice and Material Changes.....	215
Sustainable Labour Conditions.....	219
Support for Farmers: Food Security and Prefigurative Practice.....	221
Environment.....	223
Good Food.....	228
Health.....	230
Community.....	233
Accessibility: Cost and Transportation.....	235
Change.....	238
Parenting.....	243
Meat.....	245
Evaluation Summary.....	246
Chapter 7: Discussion: Connection and Discourse.....	250
Relationships and embedded economies: Market transactions mediated by solidarity.....	259
Community.....	261
Connection to a community of practice.....	265
Entrepreneurialism.....	268
Prefigurative Practices.....	271
Farming Practices.....	275
Transition draws on relationships.....	283
Activism supported by relationships.....	285
Discourse and subjects.....	290
Parenting, the original subject-making.....	290
Choose your subject.....	294
Labour conditions and co-production of discourse.....	297
Parenting and farming: pushing new discourses into the fray.....	302
The net and discursive coherence.....	305
Conclusion.....	309
Works Cited.....	314

Appendix A Interview Guide.....324  
Appendix B Farmer Information.....327  
Appendix C Farms Map.....328  
Appendix D Member Information.....329  
Appendix E Farmer and Member Information Summary.....331

## Chapter 1: Introduction

There is something very unnerving about being up to your eyeballs in the theory and the practice of something and being unable to reconcile the two. When I dug into the literature on Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), I had, as Professor David Close would say, “dirty boots” in food. I had been growing food, making food, eating food. I had procured food from roadside stalls, farmers’ markets, wet markets, dry markets, farms, grocery stores, corner stores, foraging, big box stores, and my own garden. I had a personal and political home in food before I encountered food studies. I had the lay of the land. Academically, I migrated from political science and protest movements into sociology and food movements. Reading broader food movement literature felt familiar, I could see myself and the people I bumped shoulders with procuring and growing food, however, I did not see myself when I read the literature on Community Supported Agriculture. In this sub-set of the critical food studies literature, I found the richness and complexity of the people I had encountered was not reflected. I was looking for words to describe and capture what I had seen, heard, and experienced. Yet, there were so many sensations and observations that had no theoretical shelf on which to put them.

Julie Guthman, a leading scholar in critical food studies who has published extensively on CSA, employs the concept of neoliberal governmentality in her scholarship on this subject. Drawing on Michel Foucault’s work, Guthman defines neoliberal governmentality as the “non-state mechanisms of regulation . . . that indirectly encourage subjects to act in particular ways” (Guthman, 2007b, 466). According to Guthman, these “mechanisms of regulation” seek to produce behaviour in line with the belief that “human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Harvey, 2005, 2).

Guthman's is a neo-Foucauldian interpretation of CSA which suggests that we are governed "through the regulated choices of individual citizens, now [in the modern era] construed as subjects of choices and aspirations to self-actualization and fulfillment" (Guthman, 2008b, 1176 citing Rose, 1996, 41).

Guthman's analysis of CSA through the lens of neoliberal governmentality was challenging to reconcile with my own experiences in these food spaces. Guthman's contention is that the individuals involved in Community Supported Agriculture are governed by "new governance" or non-state mechanisms of rule, whereby community and "self-organizing networks" are responsible for "conceptualizing and administering moral relations amongst persons" (Guthman 2008b, 1176 & 1173, citing Salomon, 2002, and Rose, 1999, 10). Yet my experience suggested that rather than being "unaware of what is being done to" them (Foucault, 2007, 105), and "unaware of the unequal power relationships" (Goodman and Dupuis, 2002, 7) to which they are subjected, the people who occupy these spaces are complex and also are fully aware of the pressures to as Guthman put it "act in particular ways" in accordance with neoliberalism (2007b, 466). In observing food practices, I was also struck by the diversity of ways in which people act in the world. If there is indeed pressure to act in a particular way, to engage in practices prescribed by neoliberal governmentality, I was struck by the lack of homogeneity among these practices. If these people are being encouraged to act in particular ways, what are those ways, exactly? How is it that Guthman and I can encounter similar local food spaces, albeit separated by geography and cultural differences, and find such dissimilar levels of complexity in the ways people act if these people are compelled to act in particular ways? I take up these lines of inquiry in my dissertation and explore the possibility that the gap between my experience and Guthman's analysis is a result of methodology in the application of



the theoretical tool of neoliberal governmentality and differences arising from different scales of analysis. Neoliberal governmentality is deployed at the high-level scale by Guthman who surveys other literature on a variety of CSA domains. In my project I explore the actions of CSA participants, their practices, or the ways in which they both resist and reinscribe neoliberalism, writ large, at the scale of the individual. I also bring in Dorothy Smith's materialist ontology and agent perspective to attend specifically to practices among CSA participants. By examining subject-making in Community Supported Agriculture at this scale and inclusive of practices, I explore the ways in which participants both resist and reinscribe neoliberalism.

My experience with CSA has taught me that motivations for participating in alternative food procurement and production methods such as CSA are complex but that they involve critical reflection and active choices to support certain outcomes, such as concern about the environmental footprint of food procurement and production. My experience suggests that these choices are inclusive of but somehow more than "regulated" (Guthman, 2008b, 1176). **The central question which motivated my project was therefore, what discourses and subjects are being produced through CSA participation?** In what ways do people act, in what ways are people encouraged to act, and how do these members engage with this encouragement? How do farmers and members co-produce and play with discourse and subject-making vis-à-vis foodways? How do CSA participants both resist and reinscribe neoliberalism?

### **What is Community Supported Agriculture?**

The concept of CSA is thought to originate in Japan in two forms of cooperatives driven by women consumers, "*sanchoku* groups (direct from the place of production) and *teikei*

schemes (tie-up or mutual compromise between consumers and producers)" (Pretty, 2014, 513)<sup>1</sup>. CSA - sometimes referred to as box schemes as the produce comes in a box - refers to a program in which the participants buy shares in a farm in the spring before the growing season starts in exchange for a weekly or bi-weekly box of vegetables which they receive over the growing season. The boxes are a mix of herbs, fruit, vegetables, and sometimes grains, cheese, honey, and bread. The boxes come with newsletters and recipes and usually involve direct contact at a pick-up point. There is an element of risk and uncertainty as the shares are purchased before the growing season and it is unknown what crops will be successful, but an important element of the programs is that "payment is not just for food, but for support of the farm as a whole" and thus, this uncertainty is a shared risk (Pretty, 2014, 511-512). This direct marketing<sup>2</sup> structure is "critical to the survival of more ecologically oriented farms . . . [that are] smaller – and ostensibly more sustainable" given the economic squeeze which arises from the political economic structure of the broader organic industry where few and large firms dominate (Allen and Guthman, 2006, 403). For both operators and members, CSA allows them to exchange unacceptable uncertainties (cash flow at the start of the season for operators, animal feeding practices/use of chemicals for the members) for acceptable uncertainties (the contents of the box for members) and a reduction in quantitative uncertainties (sales, prices) for the operators (Lamine, 2005, 325). This is often seen as a win-win as farmers can access a stable, more committed market without intermediaries,

---

<sup>1</sup> Robinson and Farmer (2017) note the contributions of Austrian philosopher Rudolph Steiner (1861-1925) and an African American farmer Dr. Booker T. Whatley in the 1960s and 1970s in Alabama to CSA as well (56).

<sup>2</sup> Direct marketing, such as CSA and farmers' markets (Robinson and Farmer, 2017, 26) or direct selling is based on the "interaction between the producer and consumer" (Chiffolleau, 2009, 218). Despite the common use of producer and consumer in the literature on CSA, I will use farmer and member unless directly quoting to shift the focus away from the economic perspective evoked by those terms. I follow Gibson-Graham's attention to the "capitalocentricism" in my language here: assigning "lesser value to all other processes of producing and distributing goods and services by identifying them in relation to capitalism as the same as, the opposite of, a complement to, or contained within" (2006, 56).

thereby allowing them to retain a greater share of the profits; and consumers gain access to "seasonal, fresh, and often more sustainably-grown fruits and vegetables" (Guthman, Morris, and Allen, 2006, 663). The relational impact of CSA includes operator-member relationships, operator-operator relationships, and perhaps even broader alliances (Chiffolleau, 2009). Between operators and members, the relationship has two key features: "the focus on a contract (a long-term mutual engagement between two partners) and on spatial, social, and relational proximity" (Vuilleumier, 2017, 98). CSA act as "connectors between rural and urban populations [and play] . . . a decisive role in bridging the 'rural-urban divide'" (Vuilleumier, 2017, 92 & 101).

CSA has been expanding in recent years<sup>3</sup>. In 2016, in Canada 12.7 percent (24,510 farms) of all farms did direct marketing (7474 in Ontario) and 1,274 did CSA (Statistics Canada, 2017b).. In the Ottawa valley, I compiled a list of 70 CSA from which to draw my sample. Organic farming in Canada has also increased with 4289 farms operating in 2016, comprising 2.2 percent of all farms<sup>4</sup> (an increase from 4120 farms in 2011 and 2.0 percent of total) (Statistics Canada, 2017b). Comparatively, CSA in European countries in 2015 were fewer than in Canada, with the exception of France: Serbia (2), Ireland (7), Greece (7), Poland (8), Slovakia (10), Finland (10), Sweden (12), Hungary (12), Romania (15), Croatia (20), Czech Republic (23), Austria (26), Norway (35), Netherlands (47), Switzerland (60), Spain (75), United Kingdom

---

<sup>3</sup> Canadians spend on average ten percent of their income on food (Desmarais and Wittman, 2014, 1162). While there is a "voluminous business literature" on consumers driving corporate social and environmental responsibility (Johnston, 2008, 230), this must be tempered by the understanding that ever-shrinking incomes are funding this push.

<sup>4</sup> The growth of this type of agriculture is in an overall environment in which the number of farms in Canada and the number of farm operators is decreasing, the average age of the operators is increasing (although 2016 saw an increase in farmers under the age of 35 for the first time since 1991), the farm operators are predominantly male (71.3 percent in 2016) but the number of female operators is increasing (25.7 percent in 1991, 27.4 percent in 2011, 28.7 percent in 2016) (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Across all types of agriculture, farmers, owners/operators, and paid farm workers comprise less than two percent of the Canadian population (Desmarais and Wittman, 2014, 1157, 2011 figures)

(80), Germany (92), Italy (104), Belgium (138), and France (2000) (European Research Group, 2016, 9). The United States had 7244 farms operating CSA in 2020 (U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Library). China had 500 CSA in 2015 (Hitchman, 2015). New Zealand had 2 CSA in 2020 (Savarese, Chamberlain, and Graffign, 2020, 5). Australia had 30 CSA in 2023 (Community Supported Agriculture Australia and New Zealand). Brazil saw the introduction of CSA in 2011 and now has 100 CSA in operation (Pedrosa, and Xerez, 2023, 311). The Ottawa valley has a relatively generous concentration of farms operating as CSA.

**Background: building a theoretical tool to study CSA participation**

In the literature on neoliberal governmentality a notable scholar is Michel Foucault for whom neoliberalism is a grid of intelligibility, a means of making sense of the world, based on discourse (Foucault, 2008, 243). To try and account for the gap between Guthman's (2008b) and my own observations, I explored the scholarship in which neoliberal governmentality was developed. In reviewing Foucault's work on neoliberal governmentality, I was struck by the extent to which there is an embodied component. Discourse is not only outside us in textual artifacts but is something one does, it is embodied. Discourse is a system of knowledge production and communication that allows us to understand the world. There is interplay between the embodied nature of discourse and the ways discourse conditions future actions. That is, discourse is constructed through action and future actions are constrained by discourse. Discursive control or dominance ensures one controls how the world is viewed. Control over how the world is viewed is a source of power: "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart" (Foucault, 1990, 100-101). Guthman's application of neoliberal governmentality does not necessarily closely adhere to Foucault's embodied interpretation of neoliberal governmentality and in my thesis, I attempt to close this gap. Still, even an amended Foucauldian framework does not necessarily make visible what is happening at the scale of the individual. Foucault's work is compelling scholarship for exploring the social forces influencing individuals (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 195) but less so for examining subject formation at an individual level. This is a meaningful limitation because my interest is in what is happening with the people who participate in CSA, the acting subjects, in particular "knowledge from the agent's position that can enlighten how governing operates in practice" (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 196).

I sought out theoretical tools that could allow me to understand the significance of CSA for those who participate in it. Dorothy Smith's materialist ontology is a feminist interpretation of embodied discourse analysis – one that provides guidance appropriate for understanding actions and discourse in gendered spaces. By shifting from a Foucauldian systems level analysis to Smith's agent-centered perspective, we can examine subject-making at the scale of the individual through an exploration of practices, commentary, and evaluation. This feminist theoretical perspective also implies a contextual and grounded approach. I deploy J.K. Gibson-Graham's reading for difference to analyse these practices discursively in keeping with a grounded feminist approach. Foucault's object of inquiry is discourse, not the subject, *per se*. Neoliberal governmentality is about subject creation, not solely discourse. Foucault gives us the concept of discourse, as well as the starting point of the embodied nature of discourse and an appropriate method for exploring subject-making at the individual scale can be developed using Smith's situated agent perspective. Additionally, this perspective enables us to observe the tension between reinscription of and resistance to relations of ruling, of which discourse is a part. This allows us to explore the co-production of discourse through both practices, commentary, and evaluation.

My review of the CSA literature revealed that few scholars who work on CSA ask the farmers and the members of CSA themselves what it means to them or why they're doing it<sup>5</sup>. A feminist materialist ontology, through the emphasis on the embodied nature of discourse,

---

<sup>5</sup> Notable exceptions include Miller (2008) whose work explores discourses in CSA in Ontario; Wilson (2022) whose work explores the feminist dimension of CSA in Ontario; and Andrée, Ballamingie, & Sinclair-Waters (2015) whose *Neoliberalism and the making of food politics in Eastern Ontario* with a focus on interviews with the leaders and employees of community-based food initiatives that are "larger collaborative projects" (1460), directly responds to Guthman's (2008b) piece. While Andrée, Ballamingie, & Sinclair-Waters (2015) engage directly with the discursive themes outlined by Guthman (2008b), their data set only includes one CSA and no member interviews.

highlights practices, as well as seeing the farmers and members as capable of commenting on the significance of their practices. There are many textual documents that can help us understand CSA, its members, and its farmers. However, CSA participation involves doing- the practice of CSA participation is embodied and textual, not merely textual. That is, the farmers practice farming – planting, weeding, and harvesting, as well as writing or discussing farming, or more specifically, planting, weeding, and harvesting. Deploying an analysis of practices at this scale allows us to explain the significance of the practice of weeding, as well as a text by the farmer explaining the significance of the practice of weeding. Additionally, a feminist materialist ontology has the implication of characterizing the subject as active – a participant in the creation of discourse, rather than someone who is subjected to discourse. Viewing the farmers and members as participants in the creation of discourse was important for two reasons. In my experience, the individuals I have met in food (and people generally) are indeed active in their critical self-reflection, in their reflection on discourses, and how they choose what they do. Additionally, both farmers and members produce a body of written text, photography, and video explaining Community Supported Agriculture. As social media postings are indeed created by farmers and members, I felt it necessary to have an analytical lens that could handle subjects that are active creators of discourse. The decentering of the text by this materialist ontology also shifts our understanding of the extra-local nature of text with additional implications for scholarly understandings of social media as a medium in the domain of CSA. While the produce may be rooted in place, the social media posts about the produce are not tied to place in the same way. The methodological implications of the focus on active subjects in the feminist ontology lens include that the researcher participates in the discourse, both as an interpreter of meaning and as an active subject operating under relations of ruling. The shift to a feminist lens makes

visible the complexity of power relations, characterises individuals as active participants in discourse, and brings practices into discourse creation. A feminist materialist ontology helps highlight the complexity of the individuals who participate in CSA by privileging the perspectives and knowledge of these active subjects and by rooting our inquiring in the material reality and practices of these active subjects.



**Shifting scales bears fruit**

While analysis deployed at a systems level does not allow us to explore the how individuals engage with and produce discourse, nor does it allow us to observe subject-making, analysis deployed at the individual level reveals a rich discursive landscape. By shifting from Guthman's systems level analysis to Smith's materialist ontology with a ground-level, practice-based approach, I was able to observe the generative connections experienced by CSA farmers and members, and the co-production of discourse in CSA spaces. In my research, I observed that an attention to practice and discourse at the scale of the individual reveals results that are significant beyond simply political imaginaries.

Participation in CSA cultivates connection. Members and farmers experience connection to a local geographic community, and a community of practice, contrary to the seemingly individualized nature of the market transactions which form the basis of CSA. This sense of connection is supportive of prefigurative practices, farming practices, health practices, transitioning to CSA, and activism. The relationality experienced by CSA farmers and members undergirds political activism, and the connection to communities of practice galvanizes and supports both discursive and protest practices.

Discursive co-production occurs in CSA spaces. Discourses observed at the scale of the individual are rich with both reinscription of and resistance to neoliberalism. Attention to discourse at the scale of the individual provides insight into how discourses are co-produced. Attention to discourse at the scale of the individual allows us to observe discourses in various stages of development, from those just entering the public square on social media, to those further developed, conceptually rich, with saliency for both farmers and members, and linked to political protest. Being able to observe the co-production of discourses in their various stages of

development has implications for understanding how individuals engage with neoliberal discourses, as well as for how these individuals can be active in creating “the openings” (Guthman, 2008b, 1172) that shape “our collective imaginaries of what kinds of changes can be brought about and through what means” (Alkon and Guthman, 2017, 15, quoting Guthman 2008). The communities that exist in opposition to the individualization of neoliberalism, the production of discourse that both resists and reinscribes neoliberalism, and the practices that shape our subjects and political imaginaries, are only visible when we explore Community Supported Agriculture at the scale of the individual. Guthman has made a compelling argument that our practices help shape our subjectivities which then influence our political imaginaries. Guthman is correct that subject-making matters and we should be paying closer attention to it. In my project, I develop and apply an analytical lens that engaged participants directly to better understand their perspective as active subjects. Attention to individuals in a particular location illuminates contradictory relations; the ways in which people are both constrained by discourse while simultaneously being active contributors to discourse.

**Outline**

In chapter two, I provide a literature review on agro-food scholarship on CSA. I review neoliberal governmentality and how this tool has been deployed to study food. I then examine the two central concerns about the usefulness of the neoliberal governmentality. In chapter three, I start to develop my theoretical tool kit with an exploration of Foucauldian governmentality. I build on the embodied nature of Foucault's neoliberal governmentality by shifting perspective with Smith's situated agents and then Smith's materialist ontology. I provide an overview of the literature on practices that has already been deployed to better understand CSA. I examine reading for difference as a way to deploy Gibson-Graham's diverse economies approach to a reading of CSA practices. Finally, I outline my methodology which I developed by leaning on the above-described frameworks. What follows are my results, which are outlined across three chapters. Chapter four explores practices associated with CSA, chapter five examines commentary and reflections about CSA provided by members, and chapter six looks at evaluation and material change. My seventh and final chapter discusses the significance of the results for scholarship on Community Supported Agriculture.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Agro-food scholarship on CSA

CSA has been explored by scholars of ethical consumption. Ethical consumption (Johnston and Baumann, 2014, 19) as it relates to food is "a deliberate, conscious attention to the use of food decision-making in order to enact a political stance relating to discourses of moral good and global responsibility" (Beagan et al, 2010, 753). Also termed "gentler capitalism" (Dauvergne and LeBaron, 2014, 1), "critical consumerism" or "politically charged consumer activism" (Sassatelli, 2006, 220 & 222), "green consumerism" (Lockie et al., 2000), "ethical consumerism" (Patel, 2009, 313). Ethical consumption operates at a discursive level "where self-aware, self-conscious choices can be articulated" but also at a routine level where ethical choices occur without "thinking or talking about it" (Beagan et al., 2010, 755-756). Concepts such as "citizen-consumer" attempt to reconcile the seemingly incongruous ideologies of consumerism, which celebrates the self-interested individual, and citizenship, which elevates collective social responsibility (Johnston, 2008, 229).

CSA has also been explored as an Alternative (Agri)Food Initiatives<sup>6</sup> (AFI). AFI are organizations or initiatives such as farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), urban gardens, organizations that offer micro-enterprise job training in foods, or educational programs that "affirm a shared political agenda: to create food systems that are environmentally sustainable, economically viable, and socially just" (Allen et al, 2003, 61). These initiatives:

have developed through a wide range of business models that generally engage in shorter or direct modes of exchange, circumventing retail-led chains. The re-localisation of relations of production, distribution, and consumption has become of strategic importance as food producers can add and capture more value by supporting production systems that diverge from intensification . . . defined by their ability to

---

<sup>6</sup> Also referred to as "alternative food systems" (Alkon and Guthman, 2017, 5) and alternative food networks (AFN) (Misleh, 2022, 1029).

reconfigure chains, to redistribute value toward primary producers, and to engage with production systems moving beyond 'cost-effective' rationales and aiming for more progressive relations with nature and others (Misleh, 2022, 1029).

AFI are a product of the belief that the market can solve social issues "by demonstrating a preference for particular goods, consumers can change the way those goods are produced and distributed . . . [thereby creating] a smaller, parallel, nicer capitalism" (Sharzer, 2012, 30 & 34) combined with an understanding that "agriculture is an economic sector no different from any other, and farmers should therefore be reliant on the market alone for their incomes" (Wiebe and Wipf, 2011, 11). AFI participants are understood to be *customers* or *consumers* for CSA or *shoppers* or *venders* for farmers' markets (DeLind and Bingen, 2008, 129, emphasis mine). Scholarship on ethical consumption and AFI have explored the tension between the goals of these initiatives and the attributes they share with capitalist projects<sup>7</sup>.

---

<sup>7</sup> CSA has also been explored in lifestyle politics literature. Lifestyle politics scholars Ross Haenfler, Brett Johnson, and Ellis Jones in their article "Lifestyle Movements: Exploring the intersection of lifestyle and social movements", seek to advance lifestyle movements as a means for closing conceptual gaps left by "the contentious politics (CP) model [which] has come to dominate the field of social movements" (2012, 1). These lifestyle politics theorists attempt to expand the theory developed in other areas of collective behaviour less studied by social movement theorists and apply it to food. The attempt is interesting and has been referenced in much of the subsequent literature exploring food using a framework of lifestyle politics. I have included this article here due to its citations in other works. The Haenfler et al. (2012) article is problematic insofar as the authors have not taken upon themselves to study any element of the food movement. Rather, they provide references to some existing literature trying to map their theory onto studies done by authors with other theoretical frameworks. The authors are making assertions based on the theory developed in areas such as straight-edge/sobriety "lifestyle movements" – about the link to broader movements, or contentious politics, or collective politics – and without examining food movements, without testing these theories on food (and other) movements, claiming that these same theories hold. I am reminded of the line from "The Handbook of Food and Anthropology": "the contributors to this handbook are active researchers who have conducted original, on-the-ground, person-to-person studies in a wide range of societies. There are no armchair analysts among their number" (Klein and Watson, 2019, 1). The same cannot be said for Haenfler et al. (2012) and their assertions about the food movement. I would be interested to see the authors pursue an actual study of any element of the food movement to test their theory and perhaps that would be generative. The central problem with this work is that there seems to be a lack of familiarity with the existing scholarship on social movements and a lack of familiarity with food movements. The social movement tent is big enough and diverse enough, despite the authors' assertions, to understand a wide range of behaviours as being part of social movements. Haenfler et al. (2012) assert that 'lifestyle movements' plus 'contentious politics' equals 'social movements'. The authors claim that contentious politics scholarship has neglected protests rooted in value and culture:

While social movement scholars working in the CP [contentious politics] tradition typically conceptualize movement participation and tactics in terms of public protest directed toward the state or other power structures, more recently some have begun to focus on collective actions that are aimed more directly at values expression (Dalton, 1994), discursive politics (Katzenstein, 1995), and cultural-performative forms of resistance (Haenfler et al., 2012, 6).

Analysis of AFI has evolved in three major phases. In phase one, during the late 1990s and early 2000s, economic geography underwent a cultural turn, followed by a relational turn. This period explored place-based embeddedness as part of the quality turn in agro-food production, which linked quality with specific landscapes, traditions, and culture. The social relations that were created by bringing the producers and consumers closer together through shorter supply chains was a key focus on the relational turn. For example, the work of Chiffoleau (2009) exploring CSA and other forms of direct marketing, found that they provide an opportunity for embeddedness: "economic practices that have become re-embedded in social practices . . . that are both re-localized and based on trust" (Chiffoleau, 2009, 218). Being based on "loyalty, respect, and trust" these relationships are both "cultural and political" (Chiffoleau, 2009, 220). In phase two, from the mid-2000s to 2010, geography analyses AFI using

---

Contentious politics scholarship is richer than suggested by this statement. Contentious politics literature that has expanded theory to be more inclusive of non-state centered activity, meaning-making, identity, and discursive politics, maintaining the well-established dialogue between contentious politics scholarship and new social movement theory scholarship, includes but would of course not be limited to: Ferree, M. M. et al. (2004). *Rethinking social movements: Structure, meaning, and emotion*; Coedited by one of the leading contentious politics scholars (Sidney Tarrow) and one of the leading New Social Movement Theorists (Donatella Della Porta) and dedicated to Alberto Melucci, who brought us the "new" in NSMT: Della Porta and Tarrow (Eds.) (2004). *Transnational protest and global activism*; Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, leading contentious politics scholars, who co-authored Tilly, C., & Tarrow, S. G. (2007). *Contentious politics*; Goodwin, J. & Jasper, J. (Eds) (2004). *Rethinking social movements: Structure, meaning, and emotion*, which is a wonderful collaborative effort by leading cultural, NSMT, political process, and contentious politics scholars to close the gap between the two theoretical camps; McGarry, A., & Jasper, J. (Eds.). *The Identity Dilemma: Social Movements and Collective Identity*; A founder of political process theory, McAdam, D. (1994). *Culture and social movements. New social movements: From ideology to identity*, 36-57; Melucci's chapter in H. Johnston & B. Klandermans (Eds.) *Social movements and culture* (Vol. 4). (41-63); *Bringing together framing and identity work, bridging the gap between resource mobilization and NSMT*, Hunt, S. A., Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (1994). *Identity fields: Framing processes and the social construction of movement identities*. in Larana, E., Johnston, H., & Gusfield, J. R. (eds). *New social movements: From ideology to identity*, 185-208; In the same volume, engaging with the work of Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow (contentious politics scholars): Melucci, A. (1994). *A Strange Kind of Newness: What's New' in New Social Movements* Johnston, H., Larana, E., & Gusfield, J. R. (1994). *New social movements: From ideology to identity*, 101-130. Haenfler et al. (2012) see meaning making as separate from contentious politics and not part of it, which contradicts much of the contentious politics scholarship. Contentious politics scholarship has highlighted the work that goes into identifying, naming, and defining the problems, linking people to the problems, and getting feet into the streets. Contentious politics scholarship has been inclusive of more than simply 'feet in streets' and continues to examine these dimensions. The issue seems to be that Haenfler et al. (2012) see discursive activities as separate from contentious politics, whereas contentious politics scholarship has been inclusive of these activities for decades.

neoliberalism, focusing on themes of “consumer choice, rent, voluntary regulations, localism, and self-responsibilisation” (Misleh, 2022, 1031). This period includes Guthman’s (2008b) “Neoliberalism and the making of food politics in California”, as well as her work on food labels (Guthman, 2007b), organic food standards, (Guthman, 2004), farm-to-school (Allen and Guthman, 2006), as well as the work of Allen (2010) on food justice. This second phase conceptualized AFN “as neoliberal constructs characterised as engaging in commodification, and extending market relations and neoliberal forms of governance” (Misleh, 2022, 1029).

In phase three, from 2010 to the present, the theoretical approach has shifted to “alternative, social, diverse, and community-based economies” as geography experiences a postmodern and poststructural turn, in which alterity is conceptualized as “non-economic values, normative goals, and alternative practices” (Misleh, 2022, 2031). Subject creation and values have been explored extensively in this phase. Subjects and their creation have been explored in terms of eco-governmentality. Subjectivities are created “by living with the land in particular ways . . . [by the deployment of] critical consciousness that produces possibilities for worlds to be otherwise . . . by their capacity to respond to other bodies, both human and non-human, as they labor, consume, sense, and move, that is, through their existence as subjects . . . [and] through intimate and affective attachments to landscapes (Valdivia, 2015, 474, citing Cepek, 2012; Singh, 2013; and Kosek, 2006). Subject creation has also been explored in relation to AFI such as urban gardening. Urban gardening cultivated subjects both supportive of and resistant to neoliberal governmentality:

Entrepreneur, consumer and volunteer can all be seen as mirroring neoliberal subjectivities or ‘a sense of self pervaded by market logic that reflects a consumerist mindset, accepts the retrenchment of the state from its former social welfare responsibilities, and embraces the ideals of individualism, choice, entrepreneurship, and self-help’ . . . The producer subjectivity . . . engages in the time-consuming physical labour, experience and challenge of growing one’s own food, and thereby

acknowledges the complex natural processes that food production is embedded in . . . citizen subjectivity manifests mainly in terms of the knowledge of, and care about, healthy and pesticide-free food production (Pungas et al, 2022, 128, 129, 138).

The cultivation of subjectivities in these urban gardening spaces could be the result of “enrolling” (Steup et al, 2018, 2) or “hailing” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177), or due to embodied practices: “self-identified activists are either attracted by gardening communities or the participation in gardening projects itself cultivates activist subjectivities” (Pungas et al, 2022, 129).

While subjects as they relate to CSA have not been explored, the values associated with CSA have been documented in this third phase:

Ethical concerns expressed as needs for ‘supporting local farmer’, ‘supporting the values of growing local and organic food’, and ‘supporting a good cause’, were reported as benefits of ‘supporting organic food growing’, ‘contributing toward sustainability’, and ‘sense of fulfilment of doing something positive’ . . . CSA is very small in its position against the corporate food economy, [however] it is not subordinated by the latter . . . the CSA initiatives use the conventions of the moral economy as opposed to the market economy (Mert-Cakal, & Miele, 2022, 316 & 321).

Blättel-Mink et al (2017) examined discourses in Community Supported Agriculture in Germany and observed that the “the practices of the CSA require subjectivation forms, which differ from bourgeois-capitalist social forms” (419). They developed a typology of CSA with three types: CSA as part of sociopolitical change, CSA as spiritual-communal practice, and CSA as pragmatic economic strategy (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 419). As a source for sociopolitical change, “CSA is supposed to stand in as a small-scale model for a way of life that could eventually become a more permanent social model” (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 419). As a spiritual-communal practice, “emphasis is placed on alternative value systems that can be achieved through the transformation of individuals rather than the economic system as a whole . . . [and] the creation of community as an alternative to existing tendencies of individualization” (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 419). As a



pragmatic-economic strategy, the focus is on “securing the livelihood and survival of agricultural businesses that are too small or otherwise unable to compete on the general market” and the understanding of community is “limited to financing of the farmers by the members” (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 420). The authors emphasize the heterogenous nature of CSA and call for research into the “discursive facets” of CSA in other countries (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 421). Hvitsand (2016) found that for both farmers and members in Norway, CSA provides a means for linking values and practices:

the farms are an arena for converting societal values into practical actions. The sustainable production methods practiced —and the reallocation of power back to the producers, consumers, and local community—are indicative of the transformational power CSA has had upon the current agri-food system regime. However, the challenge is to upscale these actions, as well as prevent dilution of the core values and agroecological practices seen in the Norwegian CSAs” (Hvitsand, 2016, 333).

The poststructural analysis of Gibson-Graham (2008, 2006) and Harris (2009) are central to this period’s exploration on the diversity of economic forms. Gibson-Graham’s “‘reading for difference’ responded to the neo- liberal reading of AFNs” (Misleh, 2022, 1033). Gibson-Graham (2006) sought to create new economies by overcoming the tendency to:

represent the economy as a space of invariant logics and automatic unfolding that offered no field for intervention; the tendency to theorize economy as a stable and self-reproducing structure impervious to the proliferative and desultory wanderings of everyday politics; the tendency to constitute “the” economy as a singular capitalist system or space rather than as a zone of cohabitation and contestation among multiple economic forms (xxi).

Their model for understanding how this can manifest is the feminist movement:

A feminist spatiality embraces not only a politics of ubiquity (its global manifestation), but a politics of place (its localization in places created, strengthened, defended, augmented, and transformed by women). In this admittedly stylized rendering, feminism is not about the category “woman” or identity per se, but about subjects and places. It is a politics of becoming in place” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxiv).

Gibson-Graham (2006) are responding to a literature of governmentality in which “the voice of the subject is absent and the opportunity is thereby lost to explore the ways that the project of governing and subjecting is never complete” (25 citing O’Malley et al, 1997, 503). This gap in the literature misses that “subjection does not only entail what ‘unilaterally acts on a given individual as a form of domination, but also [what] activates or forms the subject’ (Butler 1997, 84)” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 23-24, quoting Butler, 1997, 84). To close this gap in understanding, and additionally, to create “an environment for the cultivation of new economic subjects” Gibson-Graham (2006) propose the concept of community economy (78). This concept is rooted in the understanding that creating new economies involves a process of reflection on ourselves as academics, to recognize ourselves as “theorizing, authorizing subjects of economy . . . [which] requires cultivating ourselves as subjects who can imagine and enact a new economic politics” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxviii). This concept is designed to capture the:

many alternative economic movements and practices [that] are explicitly about resocializing economic relations . . . In all these movements, economic decisions (about the prices of goods, wage levels, bonus payments, reinvestment strategies, sale of stock, and so forth) are made in the lights of ethical discussions conducted within various communities . . . The shared ethic that underlies these community economic development programs privileges care of the local community and its environment (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 80).

To appreciate the significance of these activities, Gibson-Graham (2006) propose avoiding “capitalocentrism”: assigning “lesser value to all other processes of producing and distributing goods and services by identifying them in relation to capitalism as the same as, the opposite of, a complement to, or contained within” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 56).

Harris (2009) responds directly to the volume in which “Neoliberalism and the making of food politics in California” is published noting that this scholarship contends that “AFNs that are represented as explicitly alternative to the neoliberal mainstream food system in fact reproduce

the very neoliberal forms and subjectivities that they seek to oppose (Harris, 2009, 57). Harris cautions that the “tendency to read neoliberal logics and subjectivities in AFN initiatives might inadvertently be closing down possibilities for constructive socio-environmental change in and through food networks” (Harris, 2009, 55). To counter the foreclosure of this tendency, Harris (2009) draws on Gibson-Graham (2006): “we might learn to read the landscape of alternative food politics not as reproducing the dominance of hegemonic neoliberalism, but as populated by a variety of emergent institutions and practices (paraphrasing Gibson-Graham 2006, 54)” (Harris, 2009, 60). The “diverse economies” approach that Gibson-Graham (2008, 2006) and Harris (2009) inspired, explores “the diverse economic relations, the ethical underpinnings and the possibilities of these food initiatives to contribute to sustainability and community development” yet misses “addressing how alternative food initiatives are shaped by the continuous struggle with the hegemonic economic forms that develop across multiple places and scales” (Misleh, 2022, 1033). To overcome the tension between AFI seen as reproducing neoliberalism and AFI as separate from neoliberalism, Misleh (2022) proposes a dialectic relationality which focuses on “how particular structures and political conjunctures can influence the scope and content of AFNs while also investigating the possibilities of these initiatives for articulating social change” (1034). This relational dimension is between the AFI and that which they oppose. Research from this perspective would:

analyse the concrete practices of the alternative and the hegemonic: the meaning-making practices, discursive strategies, governance mechanisms, economic practices, and political and ideological work in a relational manner. Methodologically, this would involve analysing the particularities of place-based processes in connection to the macro-scale processes of social transformation unfolding in multiple and complex spatialities (Misleh, 2020, 1041).

Another theme in contemporary scholarship on AFI in general and CSA in particular is evaluation of sustainability characteristics. Community Supported Agriculture has been

evaluated for its sustainability impacts from the perspective of participants, finding that: “CSAs were regarded as delivering the highest overall social, economic and environmental benefits, followed by urban gardening (commercial), urban gardening (self-supply) and direct sales (off-farm)” (Schmutz et al, 2017, 518). Evaluation of sustainability has also been done through a literature review. Forssell and Lankoski (2015) explored the extent to which Alternative Food Networks, inclusive of CSA, are economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable:

Economic issues include the incomes and livelihoods of producers and others involved in the network, employment, and local economic development, particularly in rural areas. Social issues include labor rights and the safety of workers, consumer health, food culture, and the accessibility, availability and affordability of nutritious food (food security). Environmental impacts of food production, processing, packaging, distribution and consumption, in turn, have to do with the use of resources and with pollution and damage to the soil, water and air (including greenhouse gas emissions), biodiversity and ecosystems, and animal welfare (Forssell & Lankoski, 2015, 66).

While AFN have significant potential sustainability impacts, the authors note the gap in our understanding owing to “the unclarity over whether labor rights are considered in AFNs . . . [and issues such as] reducing meat consumption or adopting a vegetarian diet . . . avoiding food waste” (Forssell & Lankoski, 2015, 73). AFN have potential for impacting the broader food system by signaling to other food system actors that alternatives are possible (Forssell & Lankoski, 2015, 74). Specific to CSA, it is unclear whether this structure can provide a living wage to farmers, whether members are prepared to weather a bad harvest, and whether the lack of participation by members can be addressed (Forssell & Lankoski, 2015, 74). Likewise, when examining CSA in the Connecticut River Valley of Massachusetts, Paul (2019) found that while:

CSA farmers earn more farm income than other farms across the United States on average, they still earn far below the median national income and generally fail to earn a living wage . . . CSA farmers stressed the importance of the broader social, ecological, and economic benefits to farming . . . CSA has largely failed to provide adequate livelihoods for farmers to date (Paul, 2019, 162).

Samoggia et al (2019) also found that for CSA farmers in The US and Hungary, the “main CSA concern is ensuring a fair income and living wage for the farmers and labor force. There is a need for better balancing non-monetary and monetary benefits for the farmers” (3262). To fully appreciate the potential sustainability impacts of AFN, real-life instances must be examined: “The sustainability impacts are produced through AFN characteristics but real-life AFNs vary in their characteristics, and one might struggle to find an AFN that exhibits them all” (Forsell & Lankoski, 2015, 75). In the case of Brazil, Matzembacher and Meira (2019) found that “CSA activities address, in an integrated way, the social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability by promoting healthy diet, sustainable agriculture and social transformation to producers and consumers” (616).

Lamine (2015) cautions that evaluation based on the “three classical pillars of sustainability (environmental, economic and social)” inadequately assesses sustainability when deployed using the relocalisation paradigm (43) as “the relocalisation perspective does not really reconnect agriculture and food” (Lamine, 2015, 42). Alternative food systems literature includes a “focus on social actors’ agency and their ability to become active in challenging the dominant regime, and consider locally based food networks as a new paradigm for rural development . . . [or uses] actor network theory to focus on learning processes and on the connections between production and consumption” (Lamine, 2015, 45). Lamine proposes a “territorial approach that takes into account the diversity of actors and institutions involved in what I define as the territorial agrifood system” inclusive of socio-historical study, a systemic analysis of the institutions and actors involved, and deployment of sustainable transition theories to investigate both scaling up and out of these initiatives (Lamine, 2015, 55-56).

The relationships between members and farmers have received attention in recent scholarship, as well as worker relationships. This scholarship explores the nature of these relationships and the durability of these relationships as it relates to member retention. The relationship between consumer-producer interactions and farm stability has been explored finding that “direct collaboration with the consumers allows CSA farmers to gain greater independence from volatile markets, but increases their dependency on the shareholder group of consumers” (Opitz et al, 2019, 22). How social media impacts relationships has been examined by Tan and Chen (2019) who found that “engagement positively affects four relational outcomes: service satisfaction, word of mouth, social bonds, and commitment . . . The greatest impact is on commitment, while the lowest is on service satisfaction” (Tan and Chen, 2019, 36). The nature of the work relationships within CSA in Portugal were explored by Raj, Feola, and Runhaar (2023) who found that:

while CSA creates postcapitalist work relations that are non-alienated, non-monetised and full of care, they insufficiently unmake unbalanced power relations established in capitalist work relations . . . CSA initiatives could benefit from actively deconstructing internal hierarchies, de-centralising decision-making power from farm owners and addressing oppressive power relations that are ossified in their local and cultural context (1).

Member retention, crucial for CSA to provide a benefit to farmers, has been explored to determine the relationship between share customization and retention, finding that “farm-level data shows that offering share customization has no effect on CSAs’ retention rates” (Galt et al, 2019, 172). Samoggia et al (2019) found that “CSA success as an alternative agro-food production and distribution system relies on the capability to involve CSA members. Therefore, CSA farmers’ management skills may evolve to ensure the performance of communication and community engaging practices” (Samoggia et al, 2019, 3262). Yu et al (2019) found that attracting customers was linked to both demographic information (younger customers prefer

organic products) and product diversity (1). Customers also value risk-mitigation as a CSA attribute (Yu et al, 2019, 1).

One of the most widely cited agro-food scholars to study CSA is Julie Guthman. Guthman explores the ways in which neoliberalism and neoliberalization are enacted in the food movement as well as agricultural spaces (Guthman, 2008b, 1171). There is a gap of over thirty years between Michael Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France, where he first introduced the concept of governmentality, and Julie Guthman's use of the concept in the introduction to the special issue on "Neoliberalism and the making of food politics in California". Academics debate the usefulness of these concepts with Guthman contending that these concepts despite their age still have "explanatory power" in 2008 (2008b, 1173). Despite Guthman's work being categorized in the second phase of AFI analysis by Misleh (2020), her work continues to be generative for those exploring food.

Guthman's (2008b) work continues, fifteen years later, to be relevant in scholarship on alternatives to mainstream food production and consumption. Neoliberalism and the making of food politics in California is noted as an example of scholarship that argues that "consumers, activists, and farmers who create alternatives to the industrial food system 'uncritically' adopt neoliberal ideas of localism, consumer choice and value capture" (Fitzmaurice, et al. 2020, 84, citing Guthman, 2008b). The adoption of these ideas owes to neoliberal subjectivity which cultivates "trust in market solutions" (Fitzmaurice, et al. 2020, 84, citing Guthman, 2008b). The cultivation of subjectivity continues to be understood as significant for "defining the politics of possibility" (Sexton, Garnett, and Lorimer, 2022, 606, citing Guthman, 2008b).

The power to define the politics of possibility has resulted in a "an ultimate failure to meaningfully reimagine, reform or disrupt the models of agri-food capitalism they [Alternative

Food Networks] once stood against” (Sexton, Garnett, and Lorimer, 2022, 612-613, citing Guthman, 2008b). This failure to reform and disrupt has generated a “tendency to reproduce rather than challenge conventional power structures” (Sexton, Garnett, and Lorimer, 2022, 613, citing Guthman, 2008b). Alternative Food Networks, inclusive of such initiatives like CSA, and food movements more broadly have failed to:

counter the corporate food regime and transform the food systems. Food movements are accused of trying to solve social problems by placing responsibilities on individuals, which results only in changes at market level rather than state level, or changes in local policies rather than national policies (Mert-Cakal & Miele, 2022, 309, citing Guthman, 2008b).

These alternatives “reinforce the notions of consumer (like food) sovereignty, state failure, and self-reliant ordered communities [and] are in fact reproducing neoliberal subjectivities and practices” (Gerber, 2020, 248, citing Guthman, 2008b). Due to their complicity with “normalizing political rationalities and forms of power, rather than creating alternatives to, or dismantling the neoliberal food system, these alternatives often function as modes of neoliberal governmentality” (Fernando, 2020, 658, citing Guthman, 2008b). Owing to their reproduction of neoliberal governmentality, these alternative food initiatives are queried for “the extent to which these spaces promote a neoliberal ideology that relies on individual consumption choices and market mechanisms to address structural food system problems while minimising the importance of collective, state solutions” (Baumann, Johnston, & Oleschuk, 2023, 180, citing Guthman, 2008b). Rather than the transformation they intend, these “ethical foodscapes promote a neoliberal idea of food system change centred on privileged individual consumption choices that do not address systemic problems of inequality and un-sustainability” (Baumann, Johnston, & Oleschuk, 2023, 181-182, citing Guthman, 2008b). Their intentions do not prevent that “even alternative practices may contribute to the reproduction and consolidation of the neoliberal



model” (Rossi, Coscarello, & Biolghini, 2021, 5, citing Guthman, 2008b). It is the “over-dependence on entrepreneurial strategies [that] threatens to dilute the resistance elements of the local food movement agenda through the integration of a market-dominant logic that ultimately ties back to corporatization and globalization” (Mars, 2022, citing Guthman, 2008b). Neoliberal governmentality as it is deployed by Guthman (2008b) continues to generate scholarship on alternative agri-food initiatives and their relationship with neoliberalism.

### Neoliberalism and the making of food politics in California

Neoliberalism is a "big word . . . used to stitch together a wide variety of political, economic, environmental, and social projects and experiences" (Heynen et al, 2007, 3). Neoliberal governmentality is the concept of non-state regulation. These "non-state mechanisms of regulation . . . indirectly encourage subjects to act in particular ways" (Guthman, 2007b, 466). This has been associated with neoliberalism and presents a paradox in which society appears to have fewer formal or legal regulations but in-fact, "the state has grown considerably and society is more rule bound than ever" (Guthman, 2007b, 466). The scholarship on non-state mechanisms of rule reflects a Foucauldian understanding of modern power which is asserted via "micropolitics and techniques of rule" (Guthman, 2007b, 466). The neo-Foucauldian interpretation reveals mechanisms of governance "“through the regulated choices of individual citizens, now construed as subjects of choices and aspirations to self-actualization and fulfillment”" (Guthman, 2008b, 1176 citing Rose, 1996, 41). While Guthman acknowledges that neo-Foucauldians are "somewhat obscure regarding how these rationalities come into being and are carried through" (Guthman, 2008b, 1176) she never addresses head-on this lack of clarity. Within a neoliberal framework non-state means of influence and control are structured by the political project of neoliberalism. The neoliberal project is motivated by capital accumulation by the global economic elite through dispossession (Harvey, 2005, 159). The project of neoliberalism is justified by the belief in:

a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade (Harvey, 2005, 2).

Neoliberalism inspires and "legitimizes state policies to devolve responsibility for inequalities" (Dauvergne and LeBaron, 2014, 93). Peck and Tickell explain that neoliberalism is

operationalized through "roll-back neoliberalism" - the scaling back of state provided social services - and "roll-out neoliberalism" which hands off state responsibilities to public-private partnerships, encourages trade liberalization, and normalizes market solutions and systems of voluntary compliance rather than state intervention or oversight (Martin and Andrée, 2014, 176 and Andrée et al, 2015, 1452, Guthman, 2007b, 464, all citing Peck and Tickell, 2002).

Guthman applies “Foucault’s concept of governmentality – the conduct of conduct” to food and agriculture to understand how these spaces of “agro-food activism” have been “subjected to neoliberal mentalities of rule” (Guthman, 2008b, 1172 & 1173). There are two ways this happens, according to Guthman: first, “attempts to enforce market logics in their governance” and, second, attempts to “produce subjects who employ market rationales in their day-to-day behaviour” (Guthman, 2008b, 1173). Who attempts to enforce this? Who attempts to produce these subjects? This is unclear. We understand from Guthman that “various social spaces have been subjected to neoliberal mentalities of rule” (2008b, 1173) but we are not told by whom or for whom.

Guthman has observed that agro-food activism has taken up the themes of consumer choice, localism, entrepreneurialism, and self-improvement; these themes reflect the “neoliberal turn” “insofar as much of what passes as politics these days is done through highly individualized purchasing decisions” and produce neoliberal subjects through participation in “politics via markets” (Guthman, 2008b, 1171). Localism, consumer choice, and value capture are understood to be neoliberal ideas or tools that help to reproduce the neoliberal order (Guthman, 2008b, 1174). The localization of food systems, for example CSA, locavore diets, localism, 100-mile diets, “reappears today as a way to resist the globalizing food regime”

(Andrée et al, 2014, 37). Localism, inclusive of the local food movement (Sharzer, 2012; Guthman, 2008a) is:

a collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies . . . in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption [are] integrated to enhance the economic, environmental, and local health of a particular place (Feenstra, 2002, 100).

The call to “the local” among members of CSA communities emphasizes the individual who will be liberated through consumption thereby "starving social or political activism" (DeLind, 2011, 276). Similarly, the idea of consumer choice works to shift regulation from government to consumers by “giving consumers the choice to purchase particular social and environmental qualities as a form of regulation, which putatively shift value to those producers who meet those standards” (Guthman, 2008b, 1174). Consumer choice is often described as "market-as-movement" and "vote with your fork"- these elements of CSA are seen as reproducing neoliberal subjectivities (Alkon and Guthman, 2017, 12). Value capture as described by Guthman (2004) is the generation of rent in the “intangible parts of value chains” by creating barriers to entry; for example, “intellectual property rights are sources of rent, insofar as they function as barriers to entry” (Guthman, 2004, 517). For Guthman, by implementing barriers to entry, such as organic certification, money is made by those who can enter the market, and, owing to the differentiated treatment the land receives, among other factors, on the land that is farmed. Guthman contends that the themes of consumer choice, localism, entrepreneurialism, and self-improvement that she has observed in these projects have been insufficiently explored using the lens of neoliberal governmentality (2008b, 1174).

Guthman has also observed that practices relate to both neoliberalism and subjectivity (Guthman, 2008b, 1173). The use of “market rationales” or “self-conscious consumption practices are in some sense intrinsic to new forms of subjectivity” (Guthman, 2008b, 1173). It is

“participation . . . [that] produces neoliberal subjects” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177). The consumption practices among CSA participants produces participants who ultimately reproduce market rationale, creating a system whereby neoliberal spaces and subjectivities are reproduced. That is, that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between practices and subjectivities. The subjectivities produced by and reinforced by these “self-conscious consumption” practices limit our politics (Guthman, 2008b, 1175). This distortion is achieved by choking our understanding of the “politics of the possible,” and limiting “our collective imaginaries of what kinds of changes can be brought about and through what means” (Alkon and Guthman, 2017, 15, quoting Guthman 2008). The cultivation of neoliberal subjectivities is seen to limit political behaviour, shaping “what is thinkable and hence actable” (Guthman, 2008c, 1241). This is the core critique of CSA within Guthman’s work - that it prevents truly transformative political change from occurring by creating neoliberal subjects who participate in the market to the exclusion of other forms of participation because their imaginations have been stifled by their neoliberal subjectivity. Neoliberal governmentality understands that the objective of the neoliberal political project is to instill the “logic of choice, making citizens into consumers” (Guthman, 2008b, 1176, citing Dean, 1999 and Rose, 1999). These neoliberal subjects “employ market rationales in their day-to-day behaviour” (Guthman, 2008b, 1173) rather than employing “a politics that names and addresses actually existing neoliberalizations of the food system” or “a politics that might potentially restructure the way food is produced, distributed, and consumed (Guthman, 2008b, 1180).

Additionally, Guthman argues that operationalization of neoliberalism results in a wide range of impacts and it is these downstream impacts that are most often the focus of critical food studies scholarship. Guthman notes that due to the focus on neoliberalism as a set of impacts

within agro-food scholarship, there is a failure to explore neoliberal governmentality as a system of regulation in food politics (Guthman, 2008b, 1171). Yet Guthman's work on neoliberalism and CSA, just as with agro-food scholarship in general, begins with the laundry list of impacts:

from the privatization of land and water rights, to the use of free trade agreements to dismantle national-level food safety regulations, to the protracted dismantling of food-oriented (and other) entitlement programs that exist in part to combat hunger in the US (Guthman, 2008b, 1171).

These impacts are easy to see and easy to identify as neoliberal in orientation. Additionally, privatization, reduced protection of and reduced funding for national programs, and reduced social welfare capacity are commonly identified as being rooted in neoliberalism and having negative social and environmental impacts. More than simply impacts, these are also examples of ways that governments and governing bodies have inscribed or reinscribed neoliberalism into laws, programs, and practices.

Instead of neoliberalism, Guthman uses *neoliberalization* to emphasize that "these processes are always and everywhere contingent, contradictory, and unfinished . . . [we use] neoliberalization . . . to denote a process not an end state" (Guthman, 2008b, 1173). One characteristic of this ongoing process is that the adaptation of neoliberalism into varied political, geographical, cultural, economic, and social settings results in diversity. The resulting "actually existing neoliberalisms" reflect the contexts in which they emerge (Guthman, 2007b, 466). Resistance to neoliberalism, often incorporating elements of neoliberalism, furthers this variegation and the "indeterminate nature of neoliberalism itself- always an unfolding project" (Guthman, 2007b, 473).

Guthman makes a compelling argument that the presence of ideas such as localism, consumer choice, and value capture<sup>8</sup> in CSA are indicative of the creation of subjects whose choices are regulated to further the project of neoliberalism. One of the strengths of her argument is the analysis of hailing the subject: “subjects are constituted through ideology, so that subjectivity is produced when a person recognizes his or her identity in an already existing set of ideas” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177). This rings true as accurate assessment of shared understandings between various actors in the food movement<sup>9</sup>. Guthman has also captured the presence of proselytizing within the food movement: “the extent to which organic, local food has come to be intensely proselytized suggests something deeper going on about contemporary subject-making” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177).

However, there are specific weaknesses with Guthman’s approach. One of the central weaknesses of scholarship is that the article surveys projects and thus lacks specificity to particular cases or instances of CSA participation. Guthman herself makes the claim that there is diversity amongst geographical locations, histories, and particular local dynamics which exist across her study sites. In Guthman’s work there is also a mismatch between the scale and the unit of analysis; Guthman doesn’t focus on microprocesses, rather she focuses on large, top-down

---

<sup>8</sup> Guthman asserts that consumer choice, localism, entrepreneurialism, and self-improvement are neoliberal rationalities (2008b, 1171). I would quibble that some of these themes predate neoliberalism, entrepreneurialism and self-improvement in particular. Perhaps they are a feature specific to an “American” experience of neoliberalism, or perhaps these are themes relating to an “American experience” and are seen commonly, regardless of the role or presence of neoliberalism. This specificity is lacking from her arguments.

Do these themes exist pre-neoliberalism? Would not some of these derive from the “American Dream”? American dream as a phrase dates to 1931 - James Truslow Adams, *The Epic of America* vii (Blue Ribbon Books 1931) and the idea pre-dates that to the Germans fleeing to the US after the 1848 revolution -F. W. Bogen, *The German in America* (Boston: Press, 1851), quoted in Stephen Ozment, *A Mighty Fortress: A New History of the German People* (2004): 170-71. These themes predate neoliberalism by 120 years, why are they neoliberal?

<sup>9</sup> Steup et al (2018) have a more value neutral way of discussing the match of ideologies between farmers and members by using the term enroll. Farmers enroll people in the local food movement and un-black-box farming.

themes which do not necessarily capture the creation of individual subject formation. It is unclear what her unit of analysis is: individual subjects? Organizations? Activist projects? Advocates and activists?

Guthman has accurately captured some of the dimensions of CSA, which I think reflects her extensive experience researching local food, CSA, as well as agriculture more broadly however there are limitations with the theoretical toolkit Guthman uses in her work.



**Limitations of the Concepts of Neoliberalism and Neoliberal Governmentality**

Bob Jessop, Catherine Kingfisher and Jeff Maskovsky, Rajesh Venugopal, Patricia Allen, Clive Barnett, and Edmond Harris, among others, have articulated weaknesses with neoliberalism and neoliberal governmentality as explanatory concepts: 1) There is a significant gap between reality and the theory and 2) there is no clear explanation for the mechanism by which neoliberal governmentality operates. These critiques can be applied to Guthman's work.

The first limitation of neoliberalism and neoliberal governmentality is that lived reality does not correspond neatly with the theory. This is not to suggest that something akin to "neoliberalism" does not exist or does not have an impact. Rather, from an academic standpoint, we are limiting our understanding of the real world by employing this concept because we lack a "pure exemplar" for neoliberalism (Jessop, 2013, 67). Neoliberalism in the world has adapted to a variety of specific geographical and cultural contexts. The adaptation of neoliberalism to specific local contexts has led to a variety of political-cultural and governing projects, which highlights the limits of neoliberalism as a grand theory given the unevenness of the phenomenon of neoliberalism (Kingfisher and Maskovsky, 2008, 115 & 118). The diversity of existing neoliberalisms suggests that neoliberalism could function better as a "conceptual wallpaper" (Venugopal, 2015, 169) or if used as one element among many (Jessop, 2013, 73). An application of neoliberalism as a concept used in this way would be to inquire into how neoliberalism may constrain but not prevent or completely determine local food projects (Allen, 2010, 298).

Beyond concerns about the lack of a pure exemplar, there are other reasons for the gulf between the concepts of neoliberalism and neoliberal governmentality and reality. Neoliberalism and neoliberal governmentality are unable to account for the variety of resistances and

engagement within the real world due to several things which I will unpack below: a binary understanding of power, inattentiveness to movement and process, deploying the concept at an ineffective scale, and a problematic protest typology. Neoliberal governmentality attempts to conceptually link hegemonic power with daily life but is unable to account for slow moving change (Barnett, 2005, 7). Part of its inability to describe power is that neoliberal governmentality does not capture "middle ranges of agency" and the various other socio-cultural process also responsible for change (Barnett, 2005, 9-10). Moreover, Foucauldian interpretations of neoliberalism do not leave room for collective resistance more generally (Dunn, 2017, 440). The "two-dimensional understanding of political power—which is understood in terms of relations of imposition and resistance" limits our ability as researchers to describe power as it exists (Barnett, 2005, 7). As Barnett says:

Theories of “neoliberalism” are unable to recognize the emergence of new and innovative forms of individualized collective action because their critical imagination turns on a simple evaluative opposition between individualism and collectivism, the private and the public (2005, 11).

Other binaries of hegemony-subversion, individualism-collectivism, centered power-decentralized and localized resistance, state good-market bad, and public-private impair the concept's ability to describe "individualized collective action" (Harris, 2009, 61; Dunn, 2017, 435; and Barnett, 2005, 10 quoting Marchetti,2003). The penchant for binaries within scholarship that takes up neoliberalism exists in the broader sociological literature (for example, structure - agency, objective -subjective) and extends to the agri-food scholarship on production and consumption. In critical food studies, one of the results of pervasive binaries is a division of labour between rural sociologists who study agriculture and the food sociologists who study eating, diet, and culture, and very little exploration of the relationship between the two spheres (Lockie and Kitto, 2000, 4). One of the significant binaries for CSA which accounts for the split

in the literature -particularly between rural and agro-food studies- is the Marxist and production-oriented perspectives versus the more "cultural" consumption perspectives (Goodman and DuPuis, 2002, 5-6). Production oriented scholars might find it challenging interpreting CSA because for:

production-centered Marxian perspective on food systems . . . commodity exchange . . . has no 'politics' . . . political power is located in the sphere of production only [and] . . . political power is conceptualized as a coercive relationship between a dominant actor and a dominated actor who behaves according to the dominant actor's will (Goodman and Dupuis, 2002, 6).

This binary between oppression and resistance makes it challenging to capture that individuals can be simultaneously oppressive and oppressed, or that they can resist while being complicit in the structures of oppression. There seems to be a tendency to understand the food movement as a dichotomy, global or local, resistance or neoliberalization. Neoliberalism is understood to be global and the local is resistance, and there is a reluctance to criticize resistance: "a tendency in this scholarship to embrace the local and to romanticize all forms of resistance" (Guthman, 2008b, 1174). Binaries of power paint individuals as internally homogenous, either as oppressor or oppressed, when in fact, people, and indeed food movement participants, are more complex.

The inability to account for dynamism is another weakness of the concepts of neoliberalization and neoliberal governmentality. Guthman (2008b) specifically mentions the process of implementing neoliberalism through "privatization, de-regulation, devolution, commodification, and so forth" resulting in a dynamic expression of neoliberalism (1173). In the broader political economy literature, there is a continued emphasis on dynamism. The understanding that there is movement in the observed dynamic requires shifting the terminology and our methods to reflect the fact that "these processes are always and everywhere contingent, contradictory, and unfinished . . . [we use] *neoliberalization* . . . to denote a process not an end

state” (Guthman, 2008b, 1173, emphasis mine). An emphasis on the dynamic shifting nature of neoliberalization would shift our methodological approach, demanding that “these politics must be seen dialectically, with an eye toward the openings they produce as well as the closures” (Guthman, 2008b, 1172). Guthman emphasizes that the implementation of neoliberalism is an ongoing, unfolding process; this description of neoliberalism with openings and possibilities for change evokes a sense of movement. My contention is that the scale of the analysis is central to being able to register this dynamism.

The scale of the analysis also impedes the ability of the concept of neoliberalism to capture real world resistances. Neo-Foucauldian neoliberalism brings together the idea that neoliberalism is a “political economic project” and a technique of rule (Guthman, 2008b, 1173). Guthman notes that the fusion of neo-Foucauldian theory with political economy “tends to treat governmentality approaches as too “top-down” and ideological in relation to a true Foucauldian usage which focuses on the “micro-processes of everyday routines” (Guthman, 2008b, 1173 quoting Barnett, 2004, 10). It is curious that the “micro-processes of everyday routines” (Barnett, 2004, 10) is described as a “true Foucauldian usage” (Guthman, 2008b, 1173) when there is very little focus in Guthman’s (2008b) work on micro-processes. Again, a focus on micro-processes would require a shift in scale and temporality of analysis from an overview of literature across time to an examination at the scale of the individual in a specific time and place. The activities that are being described as reinscribing neoliberal governmentalities are “everyday” activism (Guthman, 2008b, 1172) and yet absent is an empirical examination of “everyday routines” which would provide insight into these micro-processes and would be truer to the theoretical concept being deployed (Barnett, 2004, 10). An emphasis on the microprocesses and everyday

activities of CSA, at a scale closer to the ground, presents an opportunity for really understanding CSA's micropolitics.

The sense of movement shifts our methodological approach as well. There is a sense that the processes of neoliberalization occur at the individual and organizational level and vary across time and space. Guthman calls for interrogating "the micro-politics of various activist projects, in terms of what strategic decisions under-gird them, how these strategies are operationalized and what sort of subjectivities they create" (2008b, 1172) yet deploys a top-down analysis in contradiction with this call. Without an exploration at the level of projects or people, it remains unclear how neoliberalism operates. In the "getting at" of people, neoliberal governmentality has yet to account for the spatial limitations of the concept - exerting force in a prison is not the same as exerting force across the globe (Harris, 2009, 60). Our methods need to account for the scale at which neoliberal governmentality is supposedly impacting people. Micropolitics are mentioned but micropolitics are not explored in Guthman's (2008b) critiques of CSA. As a comparison, Guthman's critiques of agro-food philanthropy do explore the micropolitics of the area at an appropriate scale (2008c). Claiming we need to examine a particular scale to understand a particular problem, without an examination at that scale, does not empower one to assert that politics at that scale is a product of neoliberal governmentality. It is unclear to what extent we are exploring governmentality as the analysis is not being deployed at the scale demanded by the theoretical concept of neoliberal governmentality, nor on the object suggested.

A further issue, which perhaps derives from a neo-Marxist application of neoliberal governmentality, is the protest typology used by Guthman to differentiate between protest and activism with neoliberal characteristics. Guthman describes a series of resistances to illustrate that food is "a major arena of protest" but that not all protests have the same characteristics

(2008b, 1172). The underlying assumptions are that protests must be visible, they must be loud, they must avoid legalities or naming, and they must appeal to the state. These assumptions cause us to miss resistances rooted in challenging discourse, the work done during periods of latency in movements, and the less ostentatious and less visible resistances. The spaces where meaning-making and discourse challenges occur – the features of ongoing processes as well as punctuated contentious politics - are also missed by these assumptions.

To describe the reinscription of neoliberalism by protestors, despite their broad objections to it, Guthman has created a typology of activism, divided into protests and food activism with neoliberal characteristics. This typology is informed by a Marxist agro-food scholarship understanding that "political emancipatory action, by definition, occurs only in the class struggle that takes place in the realm of production" (Goodman and Dupuis, 2002, 9). As Guthman has noted, resistance is understood to be "collectivist political subjects" (2007b, 474) using "long-standing social-movement strategies pursuing state-mandated protections for labor, the environment, and the poor" (Alkon and Guthman, 2017, 12). Thus, Marxist agro-food scholars are unable to account for the ways in which the food movement engages in incremental politics, through the transformation of identities, spaces, norms, institutions, values, lifestyles, and symbols, achieved through a variety of approaches by groups within the movement serving different purposes (Hassanein, 2003, 80-81). These assumptions inform the typology and create some of its limitations.

Title: Typology of Activism: Protests versus Activism with Neoliberal Characteristics

Protests	Activism with Neoliberal Characteristics
- protests at the WTO meetings in Seattle, Cancun and Doha	- “every day food activism”
- “guerilla tactics and more mundane legal maneuverings” in response to genetically engineered seeds.	- voluntary food labeling schemes from terroir to Fair Trade
- “theatrical antics of French “anti-globalization” activist, Jose Bove, in his ongoing direct actions against McDonalds” (Guthman, 2008b, 1172).	-the emergency food system
	-food localism/short supply chains (Guthman, 2008b, 1172).

Citation: Adapted from Guthman, J. (2008b). Neoliberalism and the making of food politics in California. *Geoforum*, 39(3), 1172.

What distinguishes a protest from “every day food activism [that] incorporates neoliberal characteristics” (Guthman, 2008b, 1172)? The typology in the table above is illustrative of how Guthman is classifying different acts of resistance. If we use these examples to better understand how Guthman is defining “protests,” a few characteristics emerge: visibility is necessary, “legal maneuverings” exclude Fair Trade and quasi-private initiatives, and only certain resistances to free trade or globalization are seen as valid. Resistances to globalization and free trade in the form of shortened supply chains, localism, or private initiatives are seen as embracing the neoliberal turn and are not protests (Guthman, 2008b, 1172).

State-centered activism is celebrated by Guthman. Guthman laments that “in some spheres they have given up on the state as a provider of subsidies – or at least harbor the conceit that change can be accomplished outside of the state” (Guthman, 2008b, 1175). The turn to the local is also seen by Guthman as a turn away from state-centered approaches. Guthman, for example, (2008b) notes that food localism has its own independent origins related to watersheds or food sheds with a limited geographical scope. Additionally, food localism has also taken on an agrarian populist bent (e.g. Wendell Berry, Wes Jackson) which equates the local with the small scale. The local and small scale have become proxies for social justice because of the failure of

the organics movement to integrate social justice issues. The gap created by the inability for the geographically expansive organics movement to address justice issues is meant to be closed by the geographically limited “local.” The local has been tasked with closing this gap as “local” holds a “discursive power” which seems to suggest that caring is possible at this scale. The implication of having caring occur at this scale is that it limits or bounds the scope of caring to the local. Part of this discursive power derives from a sense that the local is somehow pre-political or natural. Guthman (2008b) sees this draw towards the local, owing to its pre-political characteristics as a “turn away from the state, [as] articulating with devolutionary tendencies” (1177). The clear hierarchy of value for state versus non-state approaches is indicated by using terminology like “devolutionary,” which is used by Guthman (2008b) to indicate that a turn to the local is a turn away from protest and a step towards the less political “food activism [that] incorporates neoliberal characteristics” (1172). The conflation of non-state approaches with neoliberal ideology and neoliberal values is problematic. There is an acknowledgement that some of these activities are operating from anti-statist positions:

its origins must to some extent rest in a movement politics that gave up on the state as a judicious and effective regulator, before the (recent) neoliberal roll-back . . . the food movement there [in California] has been remarkably anti-statist (Guthman, 2008b, 1176 & 1180).

However, this acknowledgement does not go as far as distinguishing between an anti-statist organization, a failed state without the ability to regulate that the organizations don’t want to pursue, organizations that lack the ability to appeal to the state, or organizations that lack the political imaginaries to appeal to the state. There are multiple reasons for not appealing to the state, but no examination of the specific microprocesses that inform activist choices is given by critical food scholars. As noted with respect to Eastern Ontario, the strength of civil society organizations and “positions calling for structural change at the level of the state are either more



present in Ontario than in California, or that Guthman's characterisation of the 'turn' to the 'local' is oversimplified" (Andrée, Bellamie, & Sinclair-Waters, 2015, 1464). The diversity of tactics used by the organic certification movement including appealing to the state and appealing to the mass public has been well studied by Guthman (2014). The multiple alternative explanations (such as being anti-statist) for why a particular element of the food movement chooses a particular approach should draw us to questions about why a non-state-centered approach is used, rather than allow us to dismiss the choice as indicative of neoliberal subjectivities. That all activities outside the state are seen as being manifestations of neoliberalism rather than anti-statist approaches, despite the countercultural origins of the food movement, is problematic. Foucault observed that state-directed activism was over-emphasized because power is not so concentrated<sup>10</sup>.

Activism that does not appeal to the state is also seen as less effective by Guthman:

these food initiatives bear a pretty tenuous relationship to a politics that might potentially restructure the way food is produced, distributed, and consumed. Put another way, agro-food activism is often quite removed from a politics that names and addresses actually existing neoliberalizations of the food system" (Guthman, 2008b, 1180).

Guthman emphasizes state centered activism as the only activism that has the potential for change. Anti-statist approaches or approaches that exist on a more cultural or meaning-making level are not seen as having the power to effect change. Instead, anti-statist, cultural, or meaning-

---

<sup>10</sup> Foucault's lectures in 1978-1979 (see Foucault, 2008, *The Birth of Biopolitics*) were "a direct challenge to the 'state phobia' that was widespread in twentieth-century political thought . . . By 'state phobia' he means, firstly, the idea that the state possesses its own intrinsic tendency to expand, 'an endogenous imperialism constantly pushing it to spread its surface and increase in extent, depth and subtlety to the point that it will come to take over entirely that which is at the same time its other, its outside, its target and its object, namely: civil society' (187). Secondly, state phobia involves the idea that sovereign power is a phenomenon with its own essential characteristics. At the heart of this attitude is an essentialist conception of the state such that administrative, welfare, bureaucratic, fascist and totalitarian forms of state may all be regarded as expressions of the same underlying form: 'there is a kinship, a sort of genetic continuity or evolutionary implication between different forms of state' (187)" (Patton, 2010, 93). The location of power in discourse and knowledge reduces the concentrated power of the state.

making approaches are seen as reproducing neoliberalism. This is due to a lack of exploration of whether this turn from the state is anti-statist or if there is something else at play at this scale. Guthman has observed that “it is difficult to know what something outside of neoliberalism might look like when all is seen as neoliberalism” (2008b, 1181). While we cannot escape neoliberalism, we can shift our analysis to provide us with a different perspective of how people are engaging with neoliberalism in a particular time and place.

The protest typology created by Guthman (2008b) also excludes protests which are seen as reproducing neoliberal rationalities. This is derived, in part, from the binary understanding of political power that see people as either oppressors or oppressed, leaving no room for nuance. Guthman’s contention is that one’s behaviour cannot be classified as a protest if one’s opposition to that system of oppression simultaneously reproduces that same system of oppression. [This would disqualify all protests!]. In trying to establish what activities are protests, Guthman is asserting that activities that reinscribe certain power structures – neoliberalism – are not protests, whereas protests that reinscribe other power structures – racism – are seen as protests. There are two issues with this. Firstly, if we are using Foucauldian theory that suggests power is everywhere, we can see that all activities, protest or not, reinscribe power structures. Reinscription of power structures does not reduce the extent to which a behaviour is a protest or not; the Seattle protests which Guthman notes as a protest, are no less of a protest because they are illustrative of the racism that exists in society (see Nagra, 2003 and Starr, 2004 for analysis of racism within the anti-globalization movement broadly and in the Seattle protests more specifically). Neoliberalism and racism are enormous and pervasive systems of oppression; this dichotomy between protest and reinscription, perhaps inadvertently, creates the impression that an act of resistance can be classified as a protest only if the actors involved do not reinscribe

neoliberalism and yet if they are reinscribing racism, it is not a disqualifying feature. We understand that protests exist in the world, and that protests will reflect the systems of power in the world including systems of oppression. The ideal type of protest that reinscribes no system of oppression does not exist. Perhaps this characteristic – whether an activity reinscribes an existing system of oppression – is not an accurate means of assessing if a particular behaviour can be classified as a protest.

Measurement of reinscription also presents a problem. Scholarship on race in protests is well developed (again see Nagra, 2003; Starr, 2004) so there is better developed theory and methods for assessing the extent to which racial discrimination is reinscribed in protests. Scholarship on neoliberalization in the food movement is less developed, so perhaps there is a gap to close theoretically and in terms of our ability as researchers to describe this political action. A lingering question is, how does one measure reinscription of neoliberalism in the food movement? What metrics are available to determine if this is occurring and to what extent it is occurring? How does one identify this characteristic? At what scale is it appropriate to measure this characteristic? Guthman is attempting to illustrate that themes present at the scale of a broad literature review are proof that this activity reinscribes neoliberalism, yet this approach arguably raises more questions than it answers.

Knowledge production is not seen as contributing to politicization and resistances in Guthman's (2008b) analysis of CSA participation. Guthman (2008b) is skeptical about whether food politics is encountered through knowledge. Is there truth to the belief that "knowledge and ethical behavior . . . are interdependent . . . as if, awareness of the intimacy of food will automatically propel one to make reflexive, ethical food decisions" (Guthman, 2008b, 1175)? The "as if" suggests to me that Guthman feels knowledge is not sufficient to lead to social

change. Scholarship, such as commodity chain scholarship, which aims to produce knowledge and to transform social relations through making visible how commodities are produced along a value chain is also viewed by Guthman with skepticism as it: “takes the consumer quite seriously as a potentially powerful actor whose eating decisions can change a broader politics” (Guthman, 2008b, 1176). Foucault’s archeology of neoliberal governmentality has some unexamined problematic elements with respect to who is a holder of knowledge, however, there is an acknowledgement that knowledge interacts with power. The cause for skepticism by Guthman is unclear - perhaps the concern is how the knowledge is used: is it a weapon wielded by white people as described in “Bringing good food to others” (2008a)? This is a fair concern, but an exploration of how knowledge is engaged with, used, dispersed, wielded in food movement spaces would provide insight into the knowledge-power nexus in the food movement. Especially as food has also been a gendered “‘system of knowledge’ which women control both in terms of the ‘theoretical knowledge’ of cooking, but also the ‘practical knowledge’ of how to create a proper meal” (Sutton, 2019, 356). To simply dismiss all the ways in which knowledge is utilized without closer examination misses the nuance in the knowledge-power nexus in food movements. Perhaps an analytical lens which explores discourse and meaning-making would contribute to this understanding.

Guthman has effectively captured the pseudo-religious dimension of the food movement: “the extent to which organic, local food has come to be intensely proselytized suggests something deeper going on about contemporary subject-making” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177). The use of proselytized is accurate; however, it is unclear if experiencing proselytizing produces subjects who “employ market rationales in their day-to-day behavior” (Guthman, 2008b, 1173).

Are those proselytizing preaching neoliberalism or something else? Hailing the subject is a rich and accurate way of capturing a characteristic of the food movement:

Althusser (1971) argued that subjects are constituted through ideology, so that **subjectivity is produced when a person recognizes his or her identity in an already existing set of ideas**, what he referred to as “hailing” the subject. It seems that notions of the seasonal, local, organic have hailed a foodie/yuppie subject to be the carrier of transformation in agro-food politics. That this subject is also hailed by neoliberal rationales of choice, responsibility, and competitiveness certainly attenuates the conceivable in agro-food activism (Guthman, 2008b, 1177, emphasis mine).

These foodie or yuppie subjects are missing from Guthman’s analysis. Who are they? What exactly are they preaching? There is indeed a dynamic of hailing or proselytizing but without examination at the scale of the individual, it is difficult to say what is being proselytized. As Steup et al (2018) have observed, there is more going on in the hailing process. Farmers enroll customers in the local food movement and un-black-box farming for customers (Steup et al, 2018, 2). If we want to understand what is being unboxed for members, and what farmers are enrolling customers in, we need to speak to members and farmers. Are they being enrolled in capitalist relations or something else? What are they learning about? Guthman has observed that customers for CSA recognize themselves in the communications that are presented by the farmers. The assessment of that dynamic and shared ideological positionality is accurate. However, the assessment of the values on which farmers and members overlap being an example of neoliberal rationales of choice or responsibility or competitiveness ignores the overlap of values between farmers and members on such issues as environmental concern, community cultivation, and the ethical treatment of animals. It remains unclear exactly what is happening at the level of hailing the subject without exploring subject making at the level of the individual. The phenomenon of matching exists but Steup et al (2018) have a more neutral way of discussing that match of ideologies by using the term enroll. Additionally, there is subject

formation beyond that initial match of ideologies or match of identities or match of ideas which could be characterized as a kind of radicalization or politicization rather than a neoliberalization. Alternatively, radicalization or politicization and neoliberalization could simultaneously be at work. The negative characterization of this dynamic causes us to be inattentive to meaning-making and knowledge production, both of which undergird resistances and occur at this scale.

Neoliberal governmentality does not account for the mechanism by which it maintains power. While Guthman asserts that the idea that participation in activities “produces neoliberal subjects is well-established” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177 citing Bondi, 2005, Dolhinow, 2005, Larner, 2003, and Slocum, 2004), some scholars remain unconvinced. According to Barnett (2005, 11) neoliberal governmentality has yet to explain how it achieves subject formation - how does it get people to “believe things against their best interest” (Barnett, 2005, 11). Harris (2009) also notes the lack of a satisfactory account of “how Foucauldian concepts operate when divorced from the spatially bounded sites” these Foucauldian concepts were developed to explain (60, citing Allen, 2003, 83, and Barnett, 2005, 9). Additionally, if the participation in activities is the mechanism by which neoliberal subjects are produced, then our analysis must shift to examine activities.

Guthman writes from a Marxist sociology of agriculture perspective where the consumer is passive and “unaware of the unequal power relationships obscured by the veil of the commodity fetish” (Goodman and Dupuis, 2002, 7); this perspective, however, limits the ability of the research to account for active participation. Participants in local, organic, CSA-based food projects are not aware of what they are doing, according to Guthman. The question is how exactly, when these groups give the impression of being opposed to neoliberalism, do they continue to “produce and reproduce neoliberal forms and space of governance”? (Guthman,

2008b, 1172). Those unwittingly contributing to neoliberal governmentalities include “contemporary food sensibilities and activism, as well as the scholarship that supports it . . . [and, more generally] food politics have in some sense contributed to these techniques of rule, albeit not in pre-conceived or deliberate ways” (Guthman, 2008b, 1172 & 1176). Perhaps this is derived from Foucault’s observation that the population is “unaware of what is being done to it” (Foucault, 2007, 105). Unfortunately, simply saying that these individuals are unaware does not clarify the mechanism by which neoliberal governmentality operates.

The inability to account for lived realities, the inability to account for how power is maintained, and the inability to account for resistances due to a binary understanding of power, an inattentiveness to process and scale, and a problematic protest typology are indications that the concept of neoliberal governmentality might not be effective for understanding CSA. I wondered if a closer reading of Foucault might redeem governmentality as a generative concept to use for examining CSA. To explain the emerging concept of neoliberalism, Foucault traces the history of our understanding of what it means to govern, outlining the genealogy of neoliberal governmentality. This historical review develops several themes which can tell us a little more about how generative governmentality is for our understanding of CSA.

**Chapter 3: Theoretical Toolkit**

What tools can be used to capture subject-making given the limitations of neoliberal governmentality? To build my theoretical toolkit, I returned to Foucault's work on governmentality and found that it is crucial to understand that subject-making is an embodied process. The embodied nature of discourse shifted the scale at which my analysis must be deployed. Foucault's work provided an opportunity to explore systems level social forces (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 195) but did not provide an opening for exploring CSA from the perspective of those participating. To overcome this limitation, I sought out Dorothy Smith's (1990a) materialist ontology and situated agent perspective - a feminist interpretation of embodied discourse analysis which privileges "knowledge from the agent's position that can enlighten how governing operates in practice" (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 196). This perspective allows us to explore "the everyday world through the particularities of our local practices and activities, in the actual places of our work and the actual time it takes" (Smith, 1990b, 28). Foucault gives us the concept of discourse, as well as the starting point of the embodied nature of discourse. An appropriate method for exploring subject-making at the individual scale can be developed using Smith's situated agent perspective.

To overcome the limitations of neoliberal governmentality for examining discourse, I employ the "diverse economies" approach that Gibson-Graham (2008, 2006) developed, and Harris (2009) utilizes, which explores "the diverse economic relations, the ethical underpinnings and the possibilities of these food initiatives to contribute to sustainability and community development" (Misleh, 2022, 1033). In practice, this means "reading for difference" (Misleh, 2022, 1033, Harris, 2009). This provides an opportunity to explore Misleh's (2022) dialectic relationality which focuses on "how particular structures and political conjunctures can influence



the scope and content of AFNs while also investigating the possibilities of these initiatives for articulating social change” (Misleh, 2022, 1034). I place Gibson-Graham (2006) in conversation with Smith (1990a, 1990b) as, like Smith, Gibson-Graham are responding to a literature of governmentality in which “the voice of the subject is absent and the opportunity is thereby lost to explore the ways that the project of governing and subjecting is never complete” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 25 citing O’Malley et al, 1997, 503).

### **Foucault’s Governmentality**

Our understanding of economics begins in the family - to govern the family is to practice economy. The extension of this practice to the nation informs our understanding of good governance: “the wise government of the house for the common good of the whole family” (Foucault, 2007, 95, citing Rousseau). The development of this paternalistic approach to governing is traced by Foucault, who notes “to govern a state will thus mean the application of economy, the establishment of an economy, at the level of the state as a whole, that is to say [exercising]<sup>11</sup> supervision and control over its inhabitants, wealth, and the conduct of all and each, as attentive as that of a father's over his household and goods” (Foucault, 2007, 95).

By the eighteenth century the word economy was starting to be used in a way recognizable to contemporary scholarship and the essence of government was understood to be the art of exercising power in the form of economy, thus “government, that is to say, of the art of exercising power in the form of economy, will have what we now call economy as its principal object . . . [this word economy designates] a level of reality and a field of intervention for government” (Foucault, 2007, 95). Despite the more contemporary usage of the concept of

---

<sup>11</sup> Editor’s note: original text used the word “having” (Foucault, 2007, 95).

economy starting to emerge, a patriarchal interpretation of the family still forms the basis of the definition of what it is to govern:

The wisdom required of someone who governs is . . . precisely the knowledge of things, of the objectives that can and must be attained, and the 'disposition (disposition)' one must employ in order to attain them: this is the knowledge that constitutes the sovereign's wisdom . . . the father is someone who rises earlier than anyone else, who is the last to go to bed, and who watches over everything because he thinks of himself as being in the service of the household (Foucault, 2007, 100, discussing Perrière, 1567).

The benevolence assumed to exist in families – that the father acts in the service of the household - is not examined by Foucault. Knowledge is emphasised, yet there is no explanation of where this knowledge comes from or is created or taught. Where does the knowledge of what behaviours or things are in service of the household or government come from? Knowledge and benevolence seem to be intrinsic to the role of the father without explanation for their source. Unsurprisingly, there is no discussion of the wisdom of anyone else. This is especially troubling for the application of this concept to food. Food has historically been a source of power for women (Sutton, 2019, 350 - 356). In this theory, the centering of the father as head of household also reveals that power is assumed to be enacted by men and the things that men do. This theory does not attend to forms of power or expressions of power by those who do not fit Foucault's male referent. This theory would also be inattentive to cultural shifts which allow for changes in power achieved by those who do not fit neoliberalism's male referent.

This paternal state employs varied strategies to achieve its ends:

It is not a matter of imposing laws on men, but on the disposition of things, that is to say, of employing tactics rather than laws, or, as far as possible employing laws as tactics; arranging things so that this or that end may be achieved through a certain number of means . . . the end [goal, purpose] of government is internal to the things it directs (*diriger*); it is to be sought in the perfection, maximization, or intensification of the processes it directs, and the instruments of government will become diverse tactics rather than laws (Foucault, 2007, 99, discussing Perrière, 1567).

Of note in this quotation is the one-sided perspective. Government imposes and this imposition is experienced by an empty vessel waiting to receive this imposition. These tactics are being imposed on an anonymous mass of humanity. There is no pushback from the people on whom laws are imposed; there is barely an acknowledgement that there are people. This mass of humanity begins to become a salient concept in the eighteenth century along with a shift in our understanding of the economy. Governors became aware that there are statistical regularities within the population - death rates, disease, accidents - as well as the realization that the population has aggregate impacts. Statistics revealed that these impacts or effects aggregate and are not reducible to the family (Foucault, 2007, 104).

The population is unaware of being imposed upon. Once the family was no longer the model for government, family became the conduit through which good government was enacted. Part of this is the assumption that the population is “aware of what it wants but unaware of what is being done to it” (Foucault, 2007, 105). This introduces an epistemological dichotomy – between those who have the wisdom to govern and those who are not even aware of how they are being governed. Fathers possess natural knowledge to enable them to govern but not to observe when they are being governed.

The family was then used by government, according to Foucault, as an instrument of good government to enact population control through decreasing or increasing the birth rate or moving people to meet labour demands through migration. Then, alongside the family, the population becomes an instrument of government as well (Foucault, 2007, 105). The family and the population are both used by the government as instruments in the transition from a regime “dominated by structures of sovereignty to a regime dominated by techniques of government [this transition] revolves around population, and consequently around the birth of political

economy” (Foucault, 2007, 106). This shift – to the instrumentalization of the family and the population, including the techniques of government required by this instrumentalization – occurs without any explanation of the knowledge of the governed.

Governmentality is heralded by this scale shift. Now that Foucault has traced governing from an understanding of both government and the economy rooted in a patriarchal familial epistemology to one in which governing must happen en masse, he starts to flesh out the idea of governmentality:

First, by ‘governmentality’ I understand the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, calculations, and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific, albeit very complex, power that has the population as its target, political economy as its major form of knowledge, and apparatuses of security as its essential technical instrument . . . the tendency, the line of force, that . . . has constantly led towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power - sovereignty, discipline, and so on - of the type of power that we can call ‘government’ and which has led to the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses (appareils) on the one hand, [and on the other] to the development of a series of knowledges (savoirs). Finally, by ‘governmentality’ I think we should understand the process, or rather, the result of the process by which the state of justice of the middle ages became the administrative state in the fifteenth and sixteenth century and was gradually ‘governmentalized’ (Foucault, 2007, 108-109).

The interaction between power and knowledge is at the core of maintaining this apparatus of government, of maintaining power. Those who govern rely on a very particular science – political economy – understood to be “a type of knowledge (savoir), a mode of knowledge (connaissance) which those who govern must take into account.” (Foucault, 2008, 286). Political economists have access to knowledge that the population does not. This intersection of power and knowledge is also developed in Foucault’s work on confessional society:

the agency of domination does not reside in the one who speaks (for it is he who is constrained), but in the one who listens and says nothing; not in the one who knows and answers, but in the one who questions and is not supposed to know. And this discourse of truth finally take effect, not in the one who receives it, but in the one from whom it is wrested (Foucault, 1990, 62).

Again, we see that the understanding of power is very one-sided. The receiver of the confession holds the power, the one who gives the confession may coproduce the discourse but has no power or agency. The confessor is not conceived as a fully formed person. There is an imbalance of power in this space of coproduction. The space itself is also problematic. The confession is a male dominated area. The male priest is hearing the confession. Does he explore other areas of discourse about sex? No. Foucault thinks that “our civilization” has no erotic art (1990, 58). The elision of spaces in which the male gaze is not in charge of our discourses about sexuality is telling. Especially as there is an assumed imbalance of power which favours the male as holder of power. Foucault’s genealogy of discourse, of power, of the places in which power resides, of how it is negotiated, is steeped in patriarchy.

This patriarchal epistemology built into these conceptions of government and the economy lays the foundation for political economy and governmentality. Political economy is the knowledge held by those who govern, who engage in governmentality. The population is the target of governmentality – still unable to discern what is happening to it, lacking both knowledge and agency.

In developing the idea of a series of knowledges, Foucault introduces the idea of a grid of intelligibility. Deploying the concept of neoliberal governmentality brings into play both governmentality and neoliberalism. One mechanism for knowledge production involves making sense of the world using a grid of intelligibility. Foucault notes American neoliberalism is “more radical and much more complete and exhaustive” than German ordoliberalism and for American neoliberals, neoliberalism functions as a means of intelligibility, a means of understanding the world around you, “a principle of intelligibility and principle of decipherment of social relationships and individual behavior” (Foucault, 2008, 243). Supply and demand, for example,

can function as a schematic or framework for understanding the world around you, as an “analytical schema or grid of intelligibility” (Foucault, 2008, 243). This grid of intelligibility will allow social processes to be revealed that are not otherwise visible without this schematic (Foucault, 2008, 243). Neoliberalism is a theoretical lens through which to view and make sense of the world. However, it does not ‘reveal’ in an ‘objective’ manner.

To demonstrate an application of this grid of intelligibility, Foucault again returns to the unit of the family. The relationship between a mother and child, and he specifies the mother, seen through a neoliberal lens is understood as investment in the future human capital of the child. This investment will produce an income for the child as an adult. The benefit for the mother as a form of investment will be “psychical income”; that is, the satisfaction of a mother ensuring that their child does well in the world (Foucault, 2008, 244). The relationship between a mother and child down to the minute details is transactional, “she not only gives it food but also imparts a particular style to eating patterns, and the relationship she has with its eating, all constitute for the neo-liberals an investment which can be measured in time” (Foucault, 2008, 244). This relationship has been seen through this grid of intelligibility which distills everything down to “investment, capital, costs, and profit – both economic and psychological profit - on the capital invested” (Foucault, 2008, 244).

Does this grid of intelligibility allow us to see the richness of the parent-child relationship, or more specifically the mother-child relationship? Would the results of a study in which this grid was used be validated by the study participants? Would this grid be able to read a political dimension in a parent-child relationship? Would this grid be able to read the mothers as active? Would it read dimensions of life beyond investment? Would it read joy? Would it read resistance? Would it read meaning-making? I contend that neoliberal governmentality as an

analytical lens is not designed to capture these dimensions of human existence, nor these dimensions of food politics. Rather, it is designed to obscure these dimensions. The foundation of political economy is patriarchal. The epistemological foundations of political economy are patriarchal. Neoliberalism as a grid of intelligibility is patriarchal. Patriarchal concepts will not be able to read the behaviours or intentions of those individuals that they do not value as readable.

Limits to this grid of intelligibility are detailed explicitly by Foucault. Primarily, that it is not able to capture the whole of a person. The neoliberal grid of intelligibility “does not mean that the whole subject is considered as *homo œconomicus* [and]. . . does not imply an anthropological identification of any behaviour whatsoever with economic behavior” (Foucault, 2008, 252). That is, it does not mean that all behaviour is economic in nature, nor does it mean that all subjects are economic.

Neoliberal governmentality is an attempt, according to Guthman, to limit our political imagination, to have a stranglehold on the discourse, to limit “the arguable, the fundable, the organizable” (Guthman, 2008b, 1180). Yet, Foucault, again, is explicit about the limits: “the power gets a hold on him to the extent, and only to the extent, that he is a *homo œconomicus*” (Foucault, 2008, 252 – 253). Foucault has been explicit that the whole subject is not economic. The “surface of contact” is not all encompassing (Foucault, 2008, 252). The individual is not suffocated by this power. The individual is not buried by this power. This power or control only impacts economic activities by economic subjects. To the extent that the individual is not *homo œconomicus*, they are not controlled. Guthman (2008b) contends that economic subjectivities are being created by neoliberal governmentality and this is limiting our political imaginaries (1172).

The space for change lies in the characteristic that this grid does not remove the ability of the individual to control themselves. The individual is only:

governmentalizable, that the power gets a hold on him **to the extent, and only to the extent, that he is a *homo œconomicus***. That is to say the surface of contact between the individual and the power exercised on him, and so the principle of the regulation of power over the individual, will only be this kind of grid of *homo œconomicus*. *Homo œconomicus* is the interface of the government and the individual. But this does not mean that every individual, every subject is an economic man (Foucault, 2008, 252 – 253, emphasis mine).

This limit in the theory creates space for both individual agency and change. The gaps – where there is no contact between “the individual and the power exercised on him” (Foucault, 2008, 252 – 253) are where the interesting things happen. In these spaces, where these complex, active subjects exist, the economic subject that is vulnerable to the power of neoliberal governmentality does not. In these spaces, resistance, meaning-making, and cultural and social practices exist. The richness of the human experience exists. These spaces are obscured using neoliberalism as a lens.

The grid of intelligibility reads one’s life as transactional, but this grid lacks the capacity to read one’s whole life: “Power [only] gets a hold on him to the extent, and only to the extent, that he is a *homo œconomicus*” (Foucault, 2008, 252). Suppression only occurs at this point of contact: “It should be said that this does not mean that the level of the individual is suppressed, but rather that an element, dimension, or level of behaviour can be postulated which can be interpreted as economic behaviour and controlled as such” (Foucault, 2008, 259). The extent to which we are not economic, we cannot be controlled. This is not to say that noneconomic activity is somehow inoculated from the environment in which “action is brought to bear on the rules of the game rather than on the players, and finally in which there is an environmental type of intervention instead of the internal subjugation of individuals” (Foucault, 2008, 260).



However, this control is not all powerful. There are limits to the supposed hegemony of neoliberalization and neoliberal governmentality.

Tracing the release of these neoliberal economic subjects from their responsibility to their fellow humans, Foucault explains the idea of the invisible hand. Foucault quotes Adam Smith from *Wealth of Nations*:

By preferring the support of domestick to that of foreign industry, he intends only his own security; and by directing that industry in such a manner as its produce may be of greatest value, he intends only his own gain, and he is in this, as in many other cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part his intention (Smith, 1976, 456, quoted in Foucault, 2008, 278).

This invisible hand ensures that even though our neoliberal economic subject works selfishly for their own gain, without any regard for others, somehow, good will be done. The mechanisms by which this good comes about are unclear. The invisible hand is mythical in nature.

This invisible hand occupies a pseudo religious space:

“we should see the invisible hand as the remains of a theological conception of the natural order. Through the notion of the invisible hand, Smith would be someone who more or less implicitly fixed the empty, but nonetheless secretly occupied place of a providential god” (Foucault, 2008, 278).

Unknowability is a key feature of neoliberal governmentality. This epistemological characteristic further cultivates a pseudo religious space:

Economic rationality is not only surrounded by, but founded on the unknowability of the totality of the process . . . *Homo œconomicus* strips the sovereign of power inasmuch as he reveals an essential, fundamental, and major incapacity of the sovereign, that is to say, an inability to master the totality of the economic field (Foucault, 2008, 282 & 292).

How do we know that we can't know? This unknowability is very pseudo religious, mysteries of the faith. The epistemological position underpinning the origins of neoliberal governmentality remains unquestioned by Foucault, traced but not examined. We see this unknowability in the

lack of explanation for how this power is exercised in the pseudo religious explanation for how neoliberal governmentality gets at people.

This invisible hand, in addition to being epistemologically problematic, seems to be a very elaborate argument for not caring about your fellow humans or pursuing the collective good: “Thank heaven people are only concerned about their interests, thank heaven merchants are perfect egoists and rarely concern themselves with the public good, because that’s when things start to go wrong” (Foucault, 2008, 279). Further, “no economic agent should or can pursue the collective good . . . Political power is not to interfere with this dynamic naturally inscribed in the heart of man. The government is thus prohibited from obstructing individual interests” (Foucault, 2008, 280). Who benefits from this reasoning? Who benefits from no moral imperative to care about our fellow humans? Whose power is increased by this reasoning? The lack of commentary or critique about how this discourse impacts the interplay between knowledge and power is striking. If knowledge and power have a mutually constitutive relationship, what happens when we jettison knowledge for an invisible hand? What systems of power are maintained or created by letting the “invisible hand” do the work and avoiding any attempts to “pursue the public good”? (Foucault, 2008, 280). Who benefits from the assertion that concern for our fellow planet dwellers is not “naturally inscribed in the hearts of man?” (Foucault, 2008, 280). The proselytizing noted by Guthman (2008b, 1177) does parallel this pseudo-religious dimension of neoliberal governmentality.

There is an acceptance of certain power structures. One must not interfere with the natural and essential to human nature pursuit of self-interest that is “inscribed in the heart of man” (Foucault, 2008, 280). Power dynamics are allowed to continue to exist by being described as natural. Fathers and those who govern are naturally imbued with knowledge of how to govern.

Is this knowledge inscribed in their hearts? Foucault does not explore this. Conversely, Foucault notes that to challenge power, one must dig into the formation of truths, not accept their naturalness: it is a matter “of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time” (Rabinow, 1991, 75, quoting Foucault).

Civil society is an environment of negotiated power. Foucault uses the terms civil society, society, nation, political society, and the social interchangeably to denote the environment in which *homo aeconomicus* is governed (Foucault, 2008, 296-298). This relational environment is a transactional reality:

transactional realities (*réalités de transaction*). That is to say, those transactional and transitional figures that we call civil society, madness, and so on, which, although they have not always existed are nonetheless real, are born precisely from the interplay of relations of power and everything which constantly eludes them, at the interface, so to speak, of governors and governed (Foucault, 2008, 297).

Civil society is born from the interplay of relations of power. This is an iterative process, rooted in the day-to-day realities of the members of these relationships. The process of negotiation is an ongoing generative one: “There is a never-ending generation of history without degeneration . . . the endless formation of new social fabric, new social relations, new economic structures, and consequently new types of government” (Foucault, 2008, 308). There is a great sense of movement, openings, and possibilities for change. To capture these dynamics, to make visible how this power shifts and moves, the scale of analysis required is low to the ground, enabling us to examine the microprocesses that iterate this power.

The iterative nature of how civil society negotiates power is also captured by Foucault when he discusses the role of discourses:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable

process whereby a discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. *Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart* (Foucault, 1990, 100-101, emphasis mine).

Foucault's understanding of power is that it is everywhere, in all our interactions, that power comes into being through negotiation and interaction in our day-to-day behaviours and practices. Power does not flow top-down. Power is not rooted in hegemony. Power is a negotiated entity. If we desire to use Foucault's theory to better understand how people engage with neoliberalism, how that concept is negotiated, how it is strengthened, weakened, changed, we must stay low to the ground in the everyday, embodied, social practices of the people who are negotiating the system of power.

Foucault leans heavily on Ferguson for his discussion of civil society describing it as the "concrete, encompassing element within which the economic men [Adam] Smith tried to study operate" (Foucault, 2008, 298). Ferguson's account also emphasises the dynamic nature of these bonds; "there is no explicit contract, no voluntary union, no renunciation of rights, and no delegation of natural rights to someone else . . . there is reciprocity between the whole and its components" (Foucault, 2008, 300). There is also a tension between the economic bond and civil society, the economic bond needs civil society to function but also undoes civil society (Foucault, 2008, 302). This provides more fodder for the argument that small changes matter because they stoke this tension between civil society and the economic bond, and small changes limit the power of the economic. Both Ferguson and Foucault's understanding of civil society is one that is dynamic, negotiated, shifting as the assessment of what is good is ongoing. This understanding of the dynamic nature of civil society makes a good case for the potential for change through meaning-making.

However, the dynamic and iterative nature of power seems to be tempered by the assertion that some individuals are naturally endowed with power. Evidently, not all power is negotiated, some is innate. Civil society is “a permanent matrix of political power . . . There is a spontaneous formation of power” (Foucault, 2008, 303). This is because, according to Ferguson:

men are qualified by a great diversity of talents, by a different tone of the soul, and ardour of the passions, to act a variety of parts. Bring them together, each will find his place . . . we see that the decisions were taken, he says, in ‘more select parties.’ As individuals, some have assumed authority and others have allowed these to acquire authority over them . . . ‘It is obvious,’ Ferguson says, ‘that some mode of subordination is as necessary to men as society itself.’ (Foucault, 2008, 304 -305, quoting Ferguson).

The tension between the belief that some power structures are natural and others are negotiated appears repeatedly in the archeology of neoliberal governmentality but is not examined.

The embodied dimension of discourse is also central to our understanding of neoliberal governmentality:

The classical age discovered the body as an object and target of power. It is easy enough to find signs of the attention then paid to the body – to the body that is manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its forces. The great books of Man-the-Machine was written simultaneously on two great registers: the anatomico-metaphysical register . . . and the technico-political register, which was constituted by a whole set of regulations and by empirical and calculated methods relating to the army, the school and the hospital, for controlling or correcting the operations of the body (Foucault, 1995, 136).

The body is a site of subject making. This is most apparent in spatially limited circumstances, such as the army or schools. While critiques of neoliberalism have, rightfully, acknowledged that the spatially bounded nature of these sites weaken the applicability of this dimension of subject formation to less controlled environments, Guthman notes that the “self-conscious consumption practices are in some sense intrinsic to new forms of subjectivity” (2008b, 1174). That is, the things that people do - their practices - contribute to their subject formation, regardless of the spatial bounds of the site. This is in keeping with Foucault’s understanding of the relationship

between subjectivity and what one does. Just as a soldier is moulded by embodied practices, so too are neoliberal subjects:

By the late eighteenth century, the soldier has become something that can be made; out of a formless clay, an inapt body, the machine required to be constructed; posture is gradually corrected; a calculated constraint runs slowly through each part of the body, mastering it, making it pliable, ready at all times, turning silently into the automatism of habit, in short, one has ‘got rid of the peasant’ and given him ‘the air of a soldier’ (ordinance of 20 March 1764). Recruits become accustomed to ‘holding their heads high and erect; to standing upright, without bending the back, to sticking out the belly, throwing out the chest and throwing back the shoulders; and, to help them acquire the habit, they are given this position while standing against a wall in such a way that the heels, the thighs, the waist and the shoulders touch it, as also do the back (page 135) of the hands, as one turns the arms outwards, without moving them away from the body . . . Likewise, they will be taught never to fix their eyes on the ground, but to look straight at those they pass . . . to remain motionless until the order is given, without moving the head, the hands or the feet . . . lastly to march with a bold step, with knee and ham taut, on the points of the feet, which should face outwards’ (ordinance of 20 March 1764) (Foucault, 1995, 135-136).

The iterative process by which the posture is “gradually corrected” and by which the peasant is transformed into the soldier is not dissimilar from the disciplining of the body into a docile economic subject:

The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when an art of the human body was born, which was directed not only at the growth of its skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes it more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely. . . . A ‘political anatomy’, which was also a ‘mechanics of power,’ was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile’ bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on one hand, it turns into an ‘aptitude’, a ‘capacity’, which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. If economic exploitation separates the force and the product of labour, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constructing link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination (Foucault, 1995, 137-138).

This disciplining of the body occurs alongside, and is indeed part of, subject-making. This embodied disciplining operates at the scale of the individual:

discipline sometimes requires enclosure. . . partitioning. Each individual has his own place; and each place its individual . . . the disciplinary space is always, basically, cellular . . . It was a question of distributing individuals in a space in which one might isolate them and map them (Foucault, 1995, 141-144).

Thus, an examination of subject-making in Community Supported Agriculture would require analysis to be deployed at the scale of the individual, not a top-down thematic analysis. Subject-making, moreover, is embodied, practiced. Attentiveness to practices is necessary to understand subject-making.

Foucault is particularly attentive to the archaeology and genealogy of discourse construction, as we see in his tracing of the origins of neoliberal governmentality. His

‘history of the present’ . . . is a mode of inquiry which combines archaeological and genealogical analysis . . . archaeology refers to the construction of discourses . . . and genealogy refers to relations and interactions between discourses (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 194, citing Skehill, 2007).

This approach is focused on “the objective social forms which construct the subjectivity of people . . . instead of the acting subject” (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 198). Foucault’s work, while enriching our understanding of subject and subjectivity, demonstrates his reticence:

in terms of identifying with people as active psychological beings . . . his approach remains such that it does not easily allow analysis from the viewpoint of agents . . . outside of discursive practice. He is interested from a philosopher’s point of view in processes of power that transform individuals into subjects . . . an interest in how power can discipline people into self-regulating subjects (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 198 - 199).

The impact of this perspective on our scholarship is that:

acting subjects still remain somewhat invisible, that is, the social dynamics of the situated activity . . . remains a black box. Also, the material implications of texts . . . as regulators, as a means of governing, remain implicit. What happens in displacing the subject is that agency or causal efficacy is reassigned to discourse or language,

power is ascribed to knowledge, and the subject becomes an effect of discourse (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 199).

However, my interest is in the people, that is, the viewpoint of agents, to use Dorothy Smith's term.



### Situated Agents

Smith's situated agents provides "alternative methodological tools" that allow us to explore discourse from the perspective of individuals (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 194). Situated agents are located in, rather than external to, that which we seek to understand. This insider perspective has been neglected:

The suppression of the local and particular as a site of knowledge has been and remains gender organized. The domestic sites of women's work, traditionally identified with women, are outside and subservient to this structure. Men have functioned as subjects in the mode of governing; women have been anchored in the local and particular phase of the bifurcated world (Smith, 1990b, 18).

Smith is proposing a "reorganization of the relationship of sociologists to the object of our knowledge and of our problematic":

first placing sociologists where we are actually situated, namely, at the beginning of those acts by which we know or will come to know, and second, making our direct embodied experience of the everyday world the primary ground of our knowledge . . . The only way of knowing a socially constructed world is knowing it from within (Smith, 1990b, 22).

Smith is not the only theorist who has proposed this shift in scholarship. Black feminist scholar, Patricia Hill Collins writes of knowledge "furnished by experts who are part of a *group* and who express the *group's* standpoint" (1989, 750 emphasis added). Feminist scholar Nira Yuval-Davis explains that "without specific social agents who construct and point to certain analytical and political features, the rest of us would not be able to distinguish them" (Yuval-David, 2005, 203). Challenging who can be a knower is central to feminist scholarship.

Smith's reorganization troubles who can be a knower by challenging norms of objectivity. The norms of objectivity require "separation of knowers from what they know and in particular with the separation of what is known from knowers' interests, "biases," and so forth, that are not authorized by the discipline" (Smith, 1990b, 16). Smith notes that the "objectified knowledges

are part of the world from which our kind of society is governed” (Smith, 1990b, 13) have not included the standpoint of women. Yet, from the standpoint of women, “we can recognize the uneasiness that comes from sociology's claim to be about the world we live in, and, at the same time, its failure to account for or even describe the actual features we experience” (Smith, 1990b, 27).

The standpoint of women characterizes women as “authoritative speakers of our experience. The standpoint of women situates the sociological subject prior to the entry into the abstracted conceptual mode, vested in texts, that is the order of the relations of ruling” (Smith, 1990b, 28). This perspective allows us to explore the everyday world “through the particularities of our local practices and activities, in the actual places of our work and the actual time it takes” (Smith, 1990b, 28). A women’s standpoint “locates subject in her work with particular others, in a particular local site, her children, her partner, her neighbors, the local grocery store, and so on” (Smith, 1990a, 9). This standpoint allows us to examine “the connection between the explored and analyzed relations and the actualities of people’s lives” (Smith, 1990a, 10). This agency, this co-production of knowledge and power, is only visible with an analytical lens trained to see it:

The analysis preserves the presence of women as active subjects . . . women participate actively in them in a characteristic dialectic: people’s actual activities as participants give power to the relations that ‘overpower’ them. Women’s work and activities are an integral part of the overall organization of these relations . . . Women are not just the passive products of socialization; they are active; they create themselves (Smith, 1990a, 161).

The creation of self is understood in feminist theory to have a spatial dimension. A feminist methodology privileges the perspective of the active subjects, their material reality, and practices. A feminist spatiality:

embraces not only a politics of ubiquity (its global manifestation), but a politics of place (its localization in places created, strengthened, defended, augmented, and transformed by women). In this admittedly stylized rendering, feminism is not about

the category “woman” or identity per se, but about subjects and places. It is a politics of becoming in place (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxiv).

The rootedness of this agent perspective and feminist spatiality is critical to understanding dialectical relationality. By examining discourses at ground level, we can explore Misleh’s (2022) dialectic relationality which focuses on “how particular structures and political conjunctures can influence the scope and content of AFNs while also investigating the possibilities of these initiatives for articulating social change” (1034). This relational dimension is between the AFI and that which they oppose. Research from this perspective would:

analyse the concrete practices of the alternative and the hegemonic: the meaning-making practices, discursive strategies, governance mechanisms, economic practices, and political and ideological work in a relational manner. Methodologically, this would involve analysing the particularities of place-based processes in connection to the macro-scale processes of social transformation unfolding in multiple and complex spatialities (Misleh, 2020, 1041).

Situated agents find themselves impacted by relations of ruling. Smith’s approach:

begins from an outside discourse viewpoint on how people’s lived experiences are organized by external forces and processes she calls ‘relations of ruling’. These are distinctive trans-local forms of social organization and social relations mediated by texts. Ruling relations are, for example, objectified forms of organization constituted externally to people and places, creating and relying on textually based realities . . . According to Smith, incongruence between people’s experiences and the institutional discourse, power relations between people and the mentioned institutions and discourses are discoverable either in texts mediating them, or in people’s lived experiences of interactions with them . . . Discourse refers to trans-local relations coordinating the practices of definite individuals taking, writing, reading, and so forth, in particular local places at particular times (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 195).

The benefit of this perspective is that it allows us to explore “how the relations of ruling operate in the material practices of people who experience their effects. It is knowledge from the agent’s position that can enlighten ordinary people of how governing operates in practice” (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 196). This brings us closer to real people in the real world, shifting our

point of observation from that of a philosopher charting larger systemic movements to one of a sociologist, closer to the people engaging with those systemic movements. This shift is significant for understanding subject making at the individual level. Foucault is explicit that discourse is embodied but beyond that, the perspective from the individual is lost. I feel this is due to the nature of inquiry being the system, rather than the individual. However, Smith's critiques of the implications of this systemic perspective are valid:

Smith's critique of the Foucauldian conception of discourse is that it tends to take an overpowering and restraining role. While it displaces the basis of knowledge in individuals, it locates it externally to subjectivities as an order that imposes on them; and furthermore, it constitutes subjects, subduing them to processes of power that it articulates (Smith, 1999: 105, 109, 238; Smith, 2005: 17) (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 196 – 197).

Smith takes this further:

the Foucauldian power-knowledge relationship as a kind of metaphor for the social reality, an organization of power mediated textually. . . Foucault's scholarship of power – knowledge relation is too abstract and does not dig deep enough into the important issues to discover how it happens that power becomes intermediated to everyday practices and vice versa (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 200, citing Smith, 2005, 33).

Smith is drawing the theoretical basis of her critique from Marx:

Capital is a critique. And he's saying you can't just take these concepts and treat them as if they were the things themselves. You have to understand that, behind them they express actual social relations among people. And in the economy, there is this interchange between money and commodity or exchange (Smith quoted in Carroll, 2010, 22-23).

This insistence on linking our concepts to the actual social relations between and among people is also a rejection of binary thinking. What Smith proposes "is not a reduction of concepts to reality, but a rejection of the concepts/reality dualism in favour of a view that . . . 'Concepts are also 'in' actuality'" (Carroll, 2010, 26 – 27, quoting Smith, 1997). This rooting of concepts in the practices of people also rejects "that discourse is always overpowering, in the sense that what

you can recognize as reality and what you speak of et cetera et cetera is already predetermined” (Smith quoted in Carroll, 2010, 28). The rejection of binaries and the rejection of discourse as overpowering results in a concept that can read the dynamic play within discourse by people, that is able to read the complexity of people as they both resist and reinscribe, create, and coproduce discourses, and interact with power. If we want to understand the unfolding and undetermined nature of neoliberalism, we need a concept that can capture dynamism and tension. Within this framework, discourse is guiding but not dictatorial:

For Smith, discourse – and the texts intermediating it – is a dimension of the ruling relations, a mode which guides actor’s thinking and writing. The actor participates by reproducing or modifying discourse in the social relations provided by his or her particular material situation. Discourse creates positions for subjects – or agents (Smith, 2005: 223) – and it ‘refers to a field of relations that includes not only texts and their intertextual conversation, but the activities of people in actual sites who produce them and use them and take up the conceptual frames they circulate’ (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 197, quoting De Vault and McCoy, 2002, 772).

We are corporeal and we occupy a material world. Our theory regarding our subjectivity must reflect that. As Smith has said:

On the issue of the subject, this is a very straightforward thing. I go back to Marx: actual individuals. We’re talking about actual people. Not just subjects but people, people in bodies, et cetera, et cetera. You can’t dissolve bodies back into discourse, no matter what you do. Because there are always people who are practicing the discourse. So the discourse is something people are doing, it’s in the actual . . . But my little, I suppose, metaphor, is being in malls in Toronto. And you find this map that says ‘You are here.’ And it is that kind of finger pointing off the text, into the world in which you stand, looking at the map or reading it, that is very different. Foucault never introduces that. At all. Ever....in his notion of the subject or the constitution of the subject in discourse. He doesn’t resolve discourse back into the actualities of people who are, talking, et cetera, as we are now (Smith quoted in Carroll, 2010, 27).

Despite the necessity of exploring embodied practices at the scale of the individual to understanding subject-making in CSA, Guthman’s (2008b) analysis focuses on an overview of scholarship, an archeology in keeping with Foucault’s archeology of neoliberal governmentality. I contend that this archeological approach does not provide us with an opportunity to learn about

what is happening in CSA and cannot be used to make claims about the reproduction of neoliberal subjectivities. I find that a closer reading of Foucault is generative insofar as we are alerted to the importance of the individual as the scale of the analysis, and the importance of the practices, or things that people do, to subject-making. Dorothy Smith's work on materialist ontology allows us to benefit from an attentiveness to the individual and to practices within Community Supported Agriculture. Attentiveness to practices as discourse allows us to see spaces in which power and meaning are negotiated through doing. Smith's theory allows us to make sense of farmers and members as agentive coproducers of discourse and re-imbed their actions as both participation in an economy and social relations.

## Materialist Ontology

The rooting of discourse in practices is derived from a materialist ontology – what Marx identified as the “superstructure” (1904, 6) grounded in materialism (Marx and Engels, 1998, 37-62) (Smith, 1990a, 6):

the premises of which are not concepts or principles but the actual activities of actual individuals and the material conditions of those activities. I am exploring it by an extrapolation of a materialist ontology, namely by exploring it as the actual practices of actual individuals (Smith, 1990a, 6).

Smith’s approach “abjures the need for a totalizing theory or master frame . . . [and demands] the mode of inquiry begins where people are and explores the actual practices engaging us in the relations organizing our lives” (Smith, 1990a, 10). We must see the practices, behaviours, activities, as they are: “the ontological ground of such a sociology must therefore be *people’s actual practices and activities* as they are coordinated and co-ordered” (Smith, 1990a, 7, emphasis mine). A materialist ontology centers “the ways in which people produce their existence through a social division of labour acting upon nature” (Smith, 1990a, 7). This materialist ontology allows us access to social consciousness as it “exists now as a complex of externalized social relations organizing and coordinating contemporary society. It exists as co-ordered practices and can be investigated as such” (Smith, 1990a, 8).

The relations of power and discourse are not abstractions that exist inside our heads, they exit outside our heads in how we live our lives. This ontology connects the inside world with the outside world by asserting that “reflection and conceptualization [should be conceived as] . . . socially organized and organizing practices” (Smith, 1990a, 10). Smith’s materialist ontology departs from a Marxist position of not seeing the connection between the “things [that] go on inside people’s heads” and the things that “go on outside them” (Smith, 1990a, 10). Smith observed that:

For though Marx saw concepts as expressing social relations, he had no way of seeing concepts as part of the action. Things go on inside people's heads; and they go on outside them. People reflect and conceptualize. But though reflection and conceptualization might be thought of as part of the action, Marx does not conceive of reflection and conceptualization as socially organized and organizing practices (Smith, 1990a, 10).

Smith's materialist ontology sees organizing practices "not as mysterious operations of the subjective hidden inside people's heads, accessible only in the same medium, interpretively, but as actual ongoing social practices integral to the social courses of action I am calling social relations" (Smith, 1990a, 11). Furthermore, a materialist ontology provides us with access to both discourse and ideology by examining them as social relations "ongoingly organized in and by the activities of actual people" (Smith, 1990a, 160). This foregrounds social relations: "The basis of analysis is not the act, the action, or the actor. It is the social relation coordinating individual activity and giving people's activities form and determination" (Smith, 1990a, 94).

The implication is that we can describe our world:

we do suppose that there is a world that can be described; that this world has determinate socially constituted features which are the stable production of members, and that it is organized in such a way that language and meaning are integral to its production. We suppose that this is a world that is brought into being essentially in the practical activities of women and men (actual individuals) and that interpretation is also an activity, a practice isolating and differentiating meaning . . . We are concerned rather to explicate how our everyday experience and everyday practices are articulated to social relations characteristic of this stage of capitalism . . . The fact that the analysis of social relations in this sense has not done much at the micro-level should not deter us. At every point we attempt to view our topic or subject matter, the object of our inquiry, as practices, methods, procedures—as activity, rather than as an entity (Smith, 1990a, 90).

We can describe the space we occupy. This assertion draws us into the realm of social science where we strive to understand more of our own existence. The space we occupy, filled with relations, objects, power, *can* be described. These spaces are describable and what is observed in these spaces is created by the people that occupy these spaces through the interplay



between language, meaning, and actions. Our ability to describe these spaces challenges the limited perspective observed by neoliberal governmentality. Neoliberal governmentality has robbed us of the very words to describe these spaces:

for we had taken from the cultural and intellectual world created largely by men the terms, themes, conceptions of the subject and subjectivity, of feeling, emotion, goals, relations, and an object world assembled in textually mediated discourses and from the standpoint of men occupying the apparatuses of ruling (Smith, 1990a, 1-2).

Smith has highlighted here that the larger theoretical cannon lacks the language to describe the spaces, themes, ideas, activities, and relations that are not the purview of men. Adopting a women's standpoint draws our attention to practices and lived reality. A women's standpoint:

locates subject in her work with particular others, in a particular local site, her children, her partner, her neighbors, the local grocery store, and so on. It is a working consciousness addressing in daily and nightly practices precisely these particularities. Entry to the virtual realities of the relations of ruling call for her actual practice of their social organization (Smith, 1990a, 9).

This standpoint allows us to examine "the connection between the explored and analyzed relations and the actualities of people's lives" (Smith, 1990a, 10). Textual discourse is important; however, the text must be read by the subjects and "not everything that a text says is in the text. The missing moments in the transformative process are well understood by the practitioner of the discourse of femininity" (Smith, 1990a, 198). This emphasises the knowledge held by subjects. Rather than being passive vessels on which discourse is imposed by text, subjects are knowledgeable and active, capable of interpreting and engaging with discourse.

Subjects are not vessels waiting to be filled with discourse pouring from the texts of the powerful. Rather, subjects - researchers included - collectively shape and develop the discourses through the lived realities of their lives. This agency, this co-production of knowledge and power, is only visible with an analytical lens trained to see it:

The analysis preserves the presence of women as active subjects . . . women participate actively in them in a characteristic dialectic: people's actual activities as participants give power to the relations that 'overpower' them. Women's work and activities are an integral part of the overall organization of these relations . . . Women are not just the passive products of socialization; they are active; they create themselves . . . The relations organizing this dialectic between the active and creative subject and the market and productive organization of capital are those of a textually mediated discourse (Smith, 1990a, 161).

The dynamic of peoples' activities fueling relations is a modification of Marx's alienation: "a relation between the work individuals do and an external order oppressing them in which their work contributes to the strength of the order that oppresses them" (Smith, 1990b, 19). Alienation does not dissolve the active subject. Neoliberal governmentality sees participants in these activities as "mere bod[ies], as shape and flesh that presents itself as the potential object of another's intentions and manipulations, rather than as a living manifestation of action and intention" (Young, 1980, 154). As researchers, a feminist materialist ontology demands that we explore the interplay between active agents and discourse, as:

it is easy to misconstrue the discourse as having an overriding power to determine the values and interpretation . . . in local settings, and see this power as essentially at the disposal of [neoliberalism]. . . But the relation between discourse and local practices is not causal. Rather, women are active, skilled, make choices, consider, are not fooled or foolish. Within discourse there is play and interplay (Smith, 1990a, 203).

The denial of an active subject in neoliberal governmentality creates a double subject. This double subject - "a double subject, a subject- in-discourse who appears as passive, lacking agency, awaiting definition by a man, and a second layer of organization positioning an active and competent subject" (Smith, 1990a, 205-206). Rather than seeing people as being subjected to discourse, Smith's theory sees people as being agentive in the creation of discourse:

*Thus to explore 'femininity' as discourse means a shift away from viewing it as a normative order, reproduced through socialization, to which somehow women are subordinated . . . Social forms of consciousness, 'femininity' included, can be examined as actual practices, actual activities, taking place in real time, in real places, using definite material means and under definite material conditions. Texts, however,*

must not be isolated from the practices in which they are embedded and which they organize. The reading or viewing of texts, how people organize their activities in relation to texts, and the skills and practices involved and with how relations mediated by texts and textually determined practices operate and are operated, are essential to the investigating of textually mediated discourse. Our investigation focuses on a lived world of ongoing social action (Smith, 1990a, 163, emphasis mine).

Practices as discourse re-embeds the economy in social relations. Through linking discourse and practice, the Marxist ontology developed by Smith (1990a) reforges this lost connection:

social forms of consciousness also exist only in actual practices and in the concerting of those practices as an ongoing process. If consciousness appears as distinct from and determining social action and relations, that too is a product of the activity of real individuals and their material conditions . . . [Capitalism] abstracts relations of interdependence arising from the social division of labour from relationships between particular individuals and land, creating an independent system of relations mediated by money and commodities. It creates the category of the 'economy' as relations which can operate apart and can be seen apart from other dimensions of social existence (Smith, 1990a, 7).

Smith (1990a) is noting how "economy" has been conceptually decoupled from society by capitalism. A materialist ontology repatriates these relations.

Foregrounding social relations ensures that we do not lose sight of the social relations that create the categories that are of interest to scholars. This foregrounding of social relations offers an alternative to the sense of permanence and lack of opportunities for change in the analytical framework of neoliberal governmentality. The ossification of social categories and the treatment of "categories of capitalist social relations as the permanent features of economic processes" (Marx, 1977, 678, quoted in Smith, 1990a, 93) seems to have occurred in both Foucault's and Guthman's use of neoliberalism and neoliberal governmentality. This seeming permanence impedes our ability to observe the unfolding, evolving, dynamic social relations. This fossilization of categories occurs in part due to a centering of text. The focus on "an assemblage of 'statements' arising in an ongoing 'conversation', mediated by texts, among

speakers and hearers separated from one another in time and space” (Smith, 1990a, 161, quoting Foucault, 1972) displaces:

the analysis from the text as originating in writer or thinker . . . In the context of Foucault’s archaeology, the concept of discourse has some of the same force as structuralism in displacing the subject or reducing her to a mere bearer of systemic processes external to her (Smith, 1990a, 161).

The text does remain as an extra-local carrier of discourse: “A new kind of public arena emerges in which relations are mediated by objectified extra-local forms—the appearance of ‘codes’ which have no particular local source” (Smith, 1990a, 168). While this discussion predates social media, the extent to which we share our reflections has increased greatly. Now, these codes, exist in new mediums, but they remain:

a shared practice of reflection on others in the light of a common discursive standpoint. These are social relations. They are more than simply an expansion of communication beyond the local. They reorganize relationships among local everyday worlds within them and by relating them to others through common participation in the textually mediated discourse. People scattered and unknown to one another are coordinated in an orientation to the same texts. Public textual discourse creates new forms of social relations (Smith, 1990a, 168).

Social relations can be understood through the observation of practices. The spaces that neoliberal governmentality struggles to make sense of can be described. The practices and discourses that shape these spaces can be understood. Acknowledging the active nature of the individuals in these spaces allows us to see that discourse is co-produced by these individuals rather than imposed upon them by some outside power. This has the implication of re-embedding the economy in social relations – neoliberalism as a discourse does not come from outside. Rather, neoliberalism as a discourse is shaped through the words and practices of real people in their everyday lives. The seeming permanence of neoliberalism as discourse is troubled when we understand that both text and practice originate in people, rather than outside our social relations.

Furthermore, these data points – text and practice – are indexical and can be read and interpreted by real people:

All texts are indexical, in the sense that their meaning is not fully contained in them but completed in the setting of their reading. Texts are read or seen in context; they are articulated to the readers' relevances and practices of interpretation in definite local settings (Smith, 1990a, 197).

Smith's (1990a) materialist ontology furthers the embodied understanding of discourse put forth by Foucault by taking it out of the confined and geographically limited spaces of the military base or prison in which the embodied nature of discourse is imposed upon the receiver. Outside of these controlled environments, discourse is co-produced through practices and text by active individuals. To understand what is happening in CSA, we must explore both the textual artifacts and the practices of the people involved. We must look at the everyday practices of the people involved in co-producing discourses in Community Supported Agriculture.

**Practices**

This would not be the first scholarship on CSA that is attentive to the importance of practices. This scholarship underlines the embodied nature of CSA participation as well as the importance of practices for understanding CSA. The political consumption literature does not explicitly focus on the relationship between practice and discourse, however, the way the literature addresses the political dimension of these practices relates to the materialist ontology Smith (1990a) presents.

Political consumption literature equates some behaviours or certain consumption activities with political consumption, such as the purchase of or avoidance of particular goods. Bente Halkier and Lotte Holm (2008) aim to increase the precision of the tools deployed by those studying the politics of consumption practices by adding new criteria beyond the presence of certain behaviours (667). The concept of political consumption saw “overwhelming public interest” in Danish culture and in mass media in the mid 1990s (Jensen, 1998, 126). This interest originated in Denmark circa 1995 when consumers responded to an oil spill and nuclear testing in the marketplace (Halkier and Holm, 2008, 667). The authors work from a very simple definition:

They claim to carry out particular food practices – make specific food choices – that are meant to solve food safety issues, and at the same time, they express a food problem or food issue-oriented intentionality and see themselves as possessing autonomy in the sense that they have sufficient resources to get the food they want (Halkier and Holm, 2008, 672).

The behaviour they have chosen is food-safety motivated consumption, specifically organic produce, a strategy taken to secure “what is believed to be safe foodstuff” (Halkier and Holm, 2008, 668). Buying organic food for food safety concerns, for them, constitutes “concerned practices” which they define as “the deliberate choice of certain products because they are

considered safer than ordinary products by the consumers” (Halkier and Holm, 2008, 669).

However, food safety motivated purchases would be classified under precautionary consumption (see Mackendrick, 2010, 2018) and not social or communal in their orientation – criteria suggested by both de Moor (2016) and van Deth (2104). Halkier and Holm (2008) note that:

the activities of citizens must be directed towards some societal responsibilities in order to count as civic agency . . . one important conceptual part of political agency is intentionality . . . are actions of citizens carried out with intentions of some societal consequence? . . . we have chosen to make a rather strict empirical categorization of intentionality as actions that we see as directed towards societal and not personal concerns (Halkier and Holm, 2008, 669).

Yet, the behaviour Halkier and Holm (2008) have chosen to classify as political consumption – choosing food products based on perceived safety- is explicitly not social in its intentionality.

People, often women, engaged in reproductive labour utilize problem-solving food practices (see Klein and Watson, 2019, 378-379 for strategies related to food scarcity that represent one type of problem-solving food practices). Food provisioning is a collection of problem-solving food practices, however, this does not mean that food provisioning engages with a larger political problem. There is a contradiction here between the concept of problem-solving food practices “directed towards societal and not personal concerns” and the operationalization of the concept as “the deliberate choice of certain products because they are considered safer than ordinary products by the consumers” (Halkier and Holm, 2008, 669). Despite this methodological flaw, there is merit in being attentive to practices.

Practices are also centered by theorists exploring infrapolitics, or everyday forms of resistance. These theorists are shining light on practices that may not, at first glance, appear to be political. Indeed, the concept of “infrapolitics” has already been linked with CSA by Julien Vuilleumier (2017). Vuilleumier (2017) links practices with narratives and goals, where the practices constitute a form of "resistance to the dominant food systems" in the form of

infrapolitics: “actual practices (growing and delivering food within a community)” (Vuilleumier, 2017, 102, brackets in original). Vuilleumier (2017) is drawing on James Scott’s (1990) definition of infrapolitics - “the acts, gestures, and thoughts that are not quite political enough to be perceived as such” (Vuilleumier, 2017, 102, citing Scott, 1990) such as “everyday forms of resistance, e.g. poaching, squatting, desertion, evasion, foot-dragging” (Scott, 1990, 198). Scott (1990) calls our attention to forms of resistance and political activity beyond that which is “openly declared . . . [or] those exceptional moments of popular explosion” (199). This expands our understanding of resistance to include that which provides the “cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action” (Scott, 1990, 184). For food and agriculture, CSA “is a form of resistance . . . through the practical and material actions that are significant even if they are still discreet” (Vuilleumier, 2017, 102). Practical, material actions are centered in this theory, evoking a materialist ontology. For both Scott (1990) and Vuilleumier (2017), these practices are resistance. Vuilleumier’s work demonstrates that attentiveness to practice is key for understanding Community Supported Agriculture.

Alberto Melucci (1989) sees practices as something more than resistance; practices are the building blocks of the desired future. Practices both demonstrate to others what the desired future look like and how to achieve this desired future. For Melucci (1989), these sorts of behaviours make collective actors “nomads of the present” because they practice in the present the change that they wish to see in the future (6). CSA associated practices are a form of “prefigurative politics” (Boggs, 1977) which demonstrates that “another world is possible” (Dauvergne and LeBaron, 2014, 150). Prefigurative politics is “the embodiment, within the ongoing political practice of a movement, of those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience that are the ultimate goal” (Boggs, 1977, 100). The sentiment of



future building, of creating the structure, relations, and experiences that are the desired outcome, is echoed in the views of the participants feeling that "Together, we are building another system" (Quoting a farmer from one of the CSAs, Vuilleumier, 2017, 99). CSA represents "a prototype of the broader agenda the popular initiative has been working to advance" (Vuilleumier, 2017, 104). What future is being built? What is being prefigured? To understand this, we must explore the discourses that members engage with, resist, and reinscribe, through an exploration of the practices that prefigure this future.

Michael Carolan (2017) calls the people who practice prefigurative politics "activist citizens:"

Activist citizens, conversely, are interested in challenging routine, understandings, and practices, which makes theirs a political project versus politics as usual . . . such projects may not immediately reorder the state, they have the potential to bring about social change by challenging convention . . . Activist citizens engage in practices that help make the unthought-of thinkable and the undoable routine (Carolan, 2017, 198-199).

Carolan (2017) is utilizing practice theory. Practice theory centers:

knowings and feelings that arise through doing. These accounts argue that a focus on practice is important to help attune social scientists to those aspects of social reality that might otherwise get lost in our rush to veer away from the quotidian as we look "up" to name and identify social structures, regimes, organizational logics, and paradigms (Carolan, 2017, 200-201).

Echoing the physical, embodied understanding of discourse put forth by Foucault, Carolan notes "the principal implication of a theory of practice is that the sources of changed behavior lie in the development of practices themselves" (Carolan, 2017, 202, citing Warde, 2005, 140). We must practice to change.

Carolan (2017), Melucci (1989), Vuilleumier (2017), and Scott (1990) can be read alongside Smith's (1990a) reading of practices as discourse by championing an understanding of politics as something that people do. By doing we are communicating. Where we are doing this

communicating is also significant. For both Melucci (1989) and Foucauldian scholars, both the body and everyday lives are sites of increasing control, and resistance (Starr, 2010, 481).

Everyday acts, including food choices, can be political and the "appropriate response to new forms of control that no longer correspond solely to state action" (Melucci, 1989, 171 quoted in Starr, 2010, 481).

The focus on everyday acts makes visible forms of resistance that are not readily apparent when using neoliberal governmentality. Melucci's work throws light on movements that produce "decentralized, egalitarian, participatory, and ad hoc" organizational forms, particularly those movements that connect "personal needs" to movement participation (Buechler, 2013, 3 & 5). Additionally, his cultural approach, now called New Social Movement Theory, has been used to show how movements help create and disseminate new collective identities (McAdam, 2004, 227). The work involved in creating new collective identities is understood to be central to social movement activity (Stryker, Owens, and White, 2000, 23). New Social Movement theorists brought to light activities in already existing movements as well as highlighting newer movement forms. These new movements eschew political systems and reside instead in the day-to-day lives of people focusing on the space where needs meet political innovation (Melucci, 1994, 103). The "mundane interactive situations" are sites of cultural production, of meaning making, of subculture creation, and of relating to the dominant culture (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995, 12). Melucci's concept of collective identity is the process of constructing "the ends of the actions (the sense the action has for the actor) . . . the means (the possibilities and the limits of the action) [and the] . . . relationships with the environment (the field in which the action takes place) (Melucci, 2013, 44, brackets in original). Carolan (2017) has phrased it differently, but the gist of the argument is the same:

communities endowed with the capacity and desire to act collectively, those who believe, in other words, that change ought to occur and who feel a pull toward others . . . Citizenship in this sense is something one does (Carolan, 2017, 198).

There is a parallel between Carolan (2017), Melucci (2013), and Halkier and Holm (2008). To understand these food spaces, we must look to what people do, not simply as actions, but as a means of understanding discourse.

Meaning-making and the importance of discourse is recognized by food movement participants. They are aware of the threat of monopoly over the production of discourse but also recognise their own power as "producers of meaning" (Melucci, 1994, 113-114). The production of "narratives" (Vuilleumier, 2017, 102) is central to social change as these narratives allow us to understand the world around us. The verbal and textual products that are produced by the mundane day-to-day interactions provide data for understanding the cultural work done by a movement (Johnston and Klandermans, 1995, 12). Attentiveness to practices shifts our understanding of CSA from one that is reproducing neoliberal subjectivities to one that holds potential for "creating the discursive and physical space for engendering social change" (Allen, 2010, 305). The mechanism of producing subjectivities through practice is acknowledged by Guthman (2008b)'s "participation . . . [that] produces neoliberal subjects" (Guthman, 2008b, 1177). When we ask the question, "how do those who share an issue in common with others come to understand this commonality and then, just as importantly, how does this knowledge turn into a belief that something ought to be done on behalf of those impacted?" (Carolan, 2017, 200), the answer resides in the discourse construction work done by participants, rooted in practices. This attentiveness to practices also challenges an understanding that contentious politics is solely exemplified by 'boots in the streets' protests.

This attentiveness to practices shifts our understanding of movements from "occasional emergencies in social life located on the margins of great institutions" (Melucci, 1994, 116) or "exceptional moments of popular explosion" (Scott, 1990, 1999) to one embedded in the fabric of daily life. If we understand social movements to have periods of both visibility and latency, a focus solely on collective, public actions will not yield a clear picture of the food movement. Such a limited approach would miss the richness in the submerged networks based on personal involvement in small, separate groups that create and experiment with cultural models, acting as an "underground laboratory for antagonism and innovation" (Melucci, 1994, 127). These underground laboratories also provide the 'infrastructure' through infrapolitics: "the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action on which our attention has generally been focused" (Scott, 1990, 184). For participants, these laboratories have been described as "incubation spaces for getting people to shift from an 'I' to a 'we' mentality" (Carolan, 2017, 212, quoting a participant). By acknowledging the "politicization of everyday life" (Buechler, 2013, 2) we broaden our theory to include the birthing grounds for the more visible social movement activity. A focus on the "simple levels of social life" also provides insights into the larger system, rather than assuming the larger system explains all realms of social life (Melucci, 1994, 108). Years after Melucci's call to examine more than just these "occasional emergencies" (1994, 116), we still see a theoretical bias towards boots in streets. Luke Yates (2015) draws our attention to a bias in social movement research in favour of behaviour that is recognizable as contentious politics:

In remaining a collection of theories and empirical work about collective action, however, social movement studies has retained a perhaps inevitable bias towards adversarial social movement mobilization and highly visible social conflict, meaning analysis of the everyday has been tentative and contingent (Yates, 2015, 237).

The theoretical bias towards contentious politics and class-based politics, seems to leave these consumption behaviours classified as a resource for contentious politics or as identity-based activity or as prefigurative politics. As Yates (2015) notes, “Literature on social movements, therefore, even that ostensibly focused on ‘identity’ and ‘culture’, still implies that everyday processes are only important when there is nothing else to look at” (Yates, 2015, 241). There seems to be a discomfort with less visible, iterative, practiced-based, or meaning-based contentious politics.

Practices, from the materialist ontology developed by Smith (1990a, 6), lend themselves to discourse. Practices are understood to be “ ‘routinized way[s] in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood’ ” (Yates, 2015, 238, citing Andreas Reckwitz, 2002, 250). The contribution to discourse is visible in the way that these practices ensure that “political meanings were clearly visible, and communicated to outsiders, in their performances” (Yates, 2015, 253).

## Reading for Difference

How do we read the practices of situated agents illuminated by Smith's (1990a, 1990b) materialist ontology? Gibson-Graham (2006, 2008) and Harris (2008) propose we 'read for difference.'

Both Smith (1990a, 1990b) and Gibson-Graham (2008) decry the permanence given capitalist structures by our scholarship. Smith notes the treatment of "categories of capitalist social relations as the permanent features of economic processes" (Marx, 1977, 678, quoted in Smith, 1990a, 93). Gibson-Graham (2008) explain that these:

familiar representations of capitalism as an obdurate structure or system. . . dampen and discourage non-capitalist initiatives, since power was assumed to be concentrated in capitalism and to be largely absent from other forms of economy (Gibson-Graham, 2008, 615).

Smith (1990b) explains that theorizing is part of the:

total complex of activities, differentiated into many spheres, by which our kind of society is ruled, managed, and administered . . . These are the institutions through which we are ruled and through which we, and I emphasize this we, participate in ruling . . . The governing of our kind of society is done in abstract concepts and symbols, and sociology helps create them by transposing the actualities of people's lives and experience into the conceptual currency with which they can be governed . . . The constitution of an objective sociology as an authoritative version of how things are is done from a position in and as part of the practices of ruling in our kind of society (Smith, 1990b, 14 & 24).

Gibson-Graham (2008) note that awareness of our role in governing is informing their scholarship and the scholarship of others. Academics are "are increasingly conscious of the role of their work in creating or 'performing' the worlds we inhabit" (Gibson-Graham, 2008, 614).

Smith (1990b) notes the difficulty in enacting this change noting that:

Should we think other kinds of thoughts or experience the world in a different way or with horizons that pass beyond the conceptual, we must discard them or find some way to sneak them in. We learn a way of thinking about the world that is recognizable to its practitioners as the sociological way of thinking . . . The procedure operates as a sort of conceptual imperialism (Smith, 1990b, 15).

Gibson-Graham (2008) propose an antidote with “a poststructuralist twist – to change our understanding is to change the world, in small and sometimes major ways” (615). The counter to reading capitalism as permanent is “to bring marginalized, hidden and alternative economic activities to light in order to make them more real and more credible as objects of policy and activism” (Gibson-Graham, 2008, 613). Smith’s starting point for inquiry fits here: “We may not rewrite the other's world or impose upon it a conceptual framework that extracts from it what fits with ours. Their reality, their varieties of experience, must be an unconditional datum” (Smith, 1990b, 25). Rather than relying on strong theory to understand our data which sees “experimental forays into building new economies . . . dismissed as capitalism in another guise or as always already coopted; . . . judged as inadequate before they are explored in all their complexity and incoherence” and has “produced our powerlessness by positing unfolding logics and structures that limit politics,” Gibson-Graham propose using weak theory (2008, 618 -619).

Weak theory refuses to

extend explanation too widely or deeply, refusing to know too much. **Weak theory could not know that social experiments are doomed to fail or destined to reinforce dominance;** it could not tell us that the world economy will never be transformed by the disorganized proliferation of local projects . . . Weak theory could de-exoticize power and help us accept it as our pervasive, uneven milieu. We could begin to explore the many mundane forms of power (Gibson-Graham, 2008, 619).

The theory described by Misleh (2022) as belonging to phase two of AFI analysis (1031) resembles strong theory. Phase three, in which geography experiences a postmodern and poststructural turn, in which alterity is conceptualized as “non-economic values, normative goals, and alternative practices” (Misleh, 2022, 2031), has components of weak theory. This scholarship resists “the discursive erasure threatened by neoliberal theory, drawing attention to and thereby strengthening a range of economic practices that exist outside the

purview of neoliberal studies.” (Gibson-Graham, 2008, 620). Weak theory allows us to observe in practices “the openings they produce as well as the closures” (Guthman, 2008b, 1172).

This project is not “objective” in the sense described by Smith (1990b) in which there is a “separation of knowers from what they know and in particular with the separation of what is known from knowers' interests, "biases," and so forth, that are not authorized by the discipline” (Smith, 1990b, 16). Reading for difference to cultivate diverse economies is rooted in the understanding that creating new economies involves a process of reflection on ourselves as academics, to recognize ourselves as “theorizing, authorizing subjects of economy . . . [which] requires cultivating ourselves as subjects who can imagine and enact a new economic politics” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxviii). Reading for difference to theorize diverse economies, “is a performative ontological project –part of bringing new economies into being – rather than a realist epistemological project of capturing and assessing existing objects” (Gibson-Graham, 2008, 616). Theorizing diverse economies presents us with a choice:

to continue to marginalize (by ignoring or disparaging) the plethora of hidden and alternative economic activities that contribute to social well-being and environmental regeneration, or to make them the focus of our research and teaching in order to make them more ‘real’, more credible, more viable as objects of policy and activism, more present as everyday realities that touch all our lives and dynamically shape our futures. This is the performative ontological project of ‘diverse economies’ (Gibson-Graham, 2008, 618).

In practice, this means “reading for difference” (Misleh, 2022, 1033, Harris, 2009) utilizing the “diverse economies” approach that Gibson-Graham (2008, 2006) developed, and Harris (2009) utilizes, which explores “the diverse economic relations, the ethical underpinnings and the possibilities of these food initiatives to contribute to sustainability and community



development” (Misleh, 2022, 1033). To appreciate the significance of these activities, Gibson-Graham (2006) propose avoiding “capitalocentricism”: assigning “lesser value to all other processes of producing and distributing goods and services by identifying them in relation to capitalism as the same as, the opposite of, a complement to, or contained within” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 56). Reading the practices of people in CSA spaces for difference allows us to explore the incongruence between people in food and neoliberal governmentality theory:

According to Smith, incongruence between people’s experiences and the institutional discourse, power relations between people and the mentioned institutions and discourses are discoverable either in texts mediating them, or in people’s lived experiences of interactions with them . . . Discourse refers to trans-local relations coordinating the practices of definite individuals taking, writing, reading, and so forth, in particular local places at particular times (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 195).

This concept is designed to capture the:

many alternative economic movements and practices [that] are explicitly about resocializing economic relations . . . In all these movements, economic decisions (about the prices of goods, wage levels, bonus payments, reinvestment strategies, sale of stock, and so forth) are made in the lights of ethical discussions conducted within various communities . . . The shared ethic that underlies these community economic development programs privileges care of the local community and its environment (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 80).

Reading the practices of CSA participants – “situated agents” - for difference involves starting with the “the actual practices of actual individuals” (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 194 and Smith, 1990a, 6). These practices must be read without imposing upon that reading “a conceptual framework that extracts from it what fits with ours. Their reality, their varieties of experience, must be an unconditional datum” (Smith, 1990b, 25). These practices must also be read with an openness to exploration and without a foregone conclusion whether these “social experiments are doomed to fail or destined to reinforce dominance” (Gibson-Graham, 2008, 619). These practices must be read with a beginners’ mind: “[i]n the beginner’s mind, there are many possibilities, in the expert’s mind there are few” (Shunryu Suzuki ,1970, 1, quoted in Gibson-Graham, 2006, 8)

and avoiding “capitalocentrism” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 56). Our reading of the discourses in CSA spaces explores the practices, the reflection and conceptualization, and the evaluation that situated agents engage in through CSA participation.

Our examination in chapter four begins with an exploration of “the actual practices of actual individuals” (Smith, 1990a, 6). Chapter four explores the practices involved in CSA participation. What practices are required for CSA participation? What practices do CSA members and farmers do when they participate in CSA? This draws from Marx’s approach in *The German Ideology* in which “ideology is analysed as practices” rooted in an understanding that “social forms of consciousness also exist only in actual practices and in the concerting of those practices as an ongoing process” (Smith, 1990a, 7). This approach is mediated by a women’s standpoint which “locates subject in her work with particular others, in a particular local site, her children, her partner, her neighbours, the local grocery store, and so on” (Smith, 1990a, 9).

How people talk about what they do is explored in chapter five on commentary. Exploring how people talk about their practices allows us insight into reflection and conceptualization: “Things go on inside people’s heads, and they go on outside them. People reflect and conceptualize . . . reflection and conceptualization must be thought of as part of the action” (Smith, 1990a, 10). The practice of “interpretation is also an activity, a practice isolating and differentiating meaning” (Smith, 1990a, 90). The practices of reflection and conceptualization provide us insight into discourse: “a shared practice of reflection in light of a common discursive standpoint” (Smith, 1990a, 168). This chapter explores the significance of the practices explored in chapter four for the individuals who experience the effects of the “relations of ruling” (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 196).

This centring of reflection is based in an understanding that engaging with food production and food procurement “calls for thought, planning, the exercise of judgement, work, the use of resources, skills. Behind [food production and procurement] . . . and its interpretation is secreted a subject who is fully an agent” (Smith, 1990a, 193). These active subjects are not “puppets” – they are “critical, would discuss new products knowledgably and with discrimination” . . . [neoliberal governmentality] does not control that discourse” (Smith, 1990a, 204). As CSA members and farmers engage with the codes and images around food production and consumption, they “use, play with, break with, and oppose them” (Smith, 1990a, 204). Attentiveness to this engagement reveals “a layer of organization positioning an active and competent subject” (Smith, 1990a, 206). To capture that which emerges from “the extrapolation of play, of expertise, of pleasure in the exercise of competence” (Smith, 1990a, 206), chapter six explores the practice of evaluation. Members and farmers are indeed critical and knowledgeable; exploring the practice of evaluation captures some of this expertise as well as changes to material conditions. The “competence and agency” of these active subjects is explored in the critical reflections they make regarding their own practices (Smith, 1990a, 207). This chapter explores the practice of evaluation as well as the implications of other CSA related practices – how have these practices changed the material structure?

Let us examine the micro-politics of CSA through practices and text to better understand the discourses and subjectivities being created.

**Methods**

This project began as a dream while working on something else. Then one day, I had one of those moments of clarity: “Do the dream project now!” So, I did. I wanted to tell a story that was mine to tell. I wanted to tell a story that I felt particularly situated to tell. I wanted to tell a story that was close to “home” – I put home in quotation marks as a transplant to this land. My roots “on the mainland” are shallow and I wanted a project that would connect me to the place I now live.

I also wanted to be able to tell a story that was compatible with my life. When I had that moment of clarity – do the dream project now! - my eldest was two-and-a-half years old and my youngest was six months. I am the primary caregiver and we do not have outside childcare. I do not like to drive. These sorts of considerations structured the project. Interviews were conducted primarily via phone in the evenings, allowing us to coordinate childcare responsibilities, and for me to avoid driving. This also had implications in terms of participatory observation. As a growing family, we have the food consumption capacity to participate in multiple CSA. Methodologically, my data sites were participatory observation, interviews, and social media.

Participatory observation included my, and indeed, our, participation in multiple CSA. Since 2019, we have participated yearly in weekly vegetable CSA, both summer (18 week) and shoulder-season (Fall/Winter). We also do a once-a-year beef share yearly and have participated in pork shares and partial pork/beef shares in the past. We participated in a multi-farm “whole farm” cooperative CSA for a year. We have also participated in a-la-carte CSA, re-selling CSA, and other variations on direct and bulk sales – for example, ordering 120lbs of tomatoes yearly from farms that do CSA. We attended farm days as a family. When we do pick-up, it’s often

done together. For participatory observation, field notes were recorded and uploaded to NVivo for coding and analysis.

Title: Participatory Observation Shares

Weekly Vegetable CSA 18 week (June to October) 5 years
Fall Vegetable CSA, multiple farms (October to December) 5 years
Whole farm co-operative CSA 1 year
Beef CSA 3 years
Pork CSA 1 year
Beef/Pork a la carte from CSA farms 2 years
Fruit and Vegetable a la carte from CSA resellers 2 years
Bulk processing orders (tomatoes for canning, carrots for freezing, etc.) from various CSA farms 9 years

Informal interviews are one component of observation, inclusive of chatting with other members at pick-up, as well as other participants during farm activities, and other informal interactions. Informal interviews were recorded in field notes. Thirty-five formal interviews were conducted. Ten with farmers, nine via telephone and one in-person. These interviews were approximately an hour in length. To recruit farmers to interview, I compiled a list of all the CSA I could find in the Ottawa Valley, within 200 kilometers of Ottawa. To approximate a population to sample, I compiled a list of CSA using three sites that aggregate CSA (Savour, Lanark Local Flavour, and Ontario CSA Farm Directory). To supplement this, I also added farms that I found by following hashtags on Instagram (see below). This provided me with a list of 70 farms. I went through that list alphabetically and established which farms were still active as CSA by searching their websites, social media postings, and using the search engine, Google. Farms that appeared to be still active as CSA were sent interview requests. Many of the farms were no longer active as CSA. The information on the websites was not current. This was an issue mentioned in interviews by farmers as well, that they had contacted specific sites to get their information updated but that the website information remained out of date. I contacted twenty farms: of the farms that I contacted, three were no longer CSA, and seven did not respond or declined. I continued this process until I had interviews with farms across different types of CSA (maple

syrup, organic vegetables, non-certified vegetables, eggs, flowers, and meat). From this list, I drew a convenience sample owing to the lack of a stable population to draw from and my desire to collect data from farmers and members across various types of CSA (dairy, maple syrup, organic vegetables, non-certified vegetables, conventional vegetables, eggs, honey, and meat). I was unable to secure interviews with conventional (non-organic) CSA farmer, dairy CSA, or honey CSA. Of the farmers interviewed, four are ecological/non-certified organic, five are certified organic, and one farm moved between certified and non-certified over the course of the project. These farms produce vegetables (eight of the farms), flowers (two of the farms), meat - beef, pork, chicken- (two of the farms), eggs (two of the farms), maple syrup (one of the farms). Two farms offer meat from other producers. Two of the farms offer prepared foods. The total of products that farms produced exceeds ten as many farms produce multiple products. Of the farmers interviewed, one is a CSA in which I participate, one farmer I have purchased bulk tomatoes from in a previous farm they operated, as well as from the farm they operated when interviewed, and one I have purchased maple syrup from them on a farm day, though I did not interact with the farmer during purchase. The multi-farm box I participated in contained products from multiple farms, but I did not interact with the farmers aside from the first pickup (after the first pickup, the boxes were delivered with all products assembled). These interviews provided information on the range and scope of practices, intentions, and agency associated with CSA operators. These CSA forms cover a wide range of practices associated with varied understandings of sustainability as well as numerous price points.

For members, twenty-five interviews were conducted with twenty-six members (one couple interviewed together), four in-person, and the remaining twenty-two via telephone. As

many of the practices associated with CSA are performed in private or at times when I am not present, interviews provide a substantial portion of the data on practices.

The interviewees participated in CSA that provided meat (6), vegetables (26), maple syrup (1), eggs (1), honey (1), and a multi-farm box (1). Interviewees were recruited via email (1), via handing out business cards during CSA pick-up (13), via introduction by farmer (6), or via word of mouth (5 interviews, six participants), all convenience sample with the aim of interviews with members across different types of CSA. Six of the farmers interviewed provided introductions to their members either via allowing me to hand out business cards at CSA pickup (2 farms) or sending out emails to their members to request participation, passing along my contact information. One interview I solicited via following hashtags on IG and reaching out to that person (they actively post about CSA in the Ottawa Valley). Four interviews were obtained by having my partner send a recruitment email to colleagues at Carleton University (where there have been CSA pickups). In each interview I did, I encouraged the interviewee to pass along my information to other people they knew who participate in CSA or had done so in the past, this produced one interview. Of these interviewees, I had been introduced to one prior to commencing my research. Formal interviews were recorded, transcribed, and uploaded to NVivo for coding and analysis. The interview questions can be found in the interview guide in Appendix A. Demographic and geographic information can be found in Appendix B Farmer Information, Appendix C Farms Map, Appendix D Member Information, and Appendix E Farmer and Member Information Summary.

Research limitations of interviews include the accuracy of self-reported behaviour. Specifically relating to shopping, “consumers are not always aware of what happens when they purchase goods because of the role of habit and routines, or a lack of willingness to account

accurately for their purchases” (Gram, 2010, 394). Self-reported responses to questions sometimes reflect “what they believed they did but these beliefs might not necessarily correspond to what they actually did” (Mendez, 2009, cited in Gram, 2010, 395). In interviews on self-reporting shopping behaviour, there can be impact from the “social desirability factor” which influences how people “chose to present themselves” (Gram, 2010, 395). An additional consideration is the willingness to participate in such a research project which limits the participants to “mainly interested individuals with distinctive intentions and qualities” (Leverenz et al, 2019, 7). This was evident in the data collection phase. While I did not specifically ask for professional information about the participants, through interviews I learned that many held white-collar jobs in government or academia, and some had education and/or employment related to environmental protection. Additionally, the members and farmers participate in organic, beyond organic, or regenerative CSA, further narrowing the universality of findings. An additional methodological consideration is that most of the interviews were conducted by phone (thirty-one of thirty-six interviewees were interviewed by phone, five in-person) which conferred several benefits:

Reported advantages of telephone interviews include decreased cost and travel, ability to reach geographically dispersed respondents . . . participants may feel more relaxed and able to disclose sensitive information when not in the interviewer’s presence . . . because the physical appearance of interviewer and participant has less influence in the telephone interview, participants might feel more at ease and focused on the conversation (Novick, 2008, 391 & 397).

Social media posts were also a source of information on practices. CSA farmers and members share substantial information on social media sites such as Instagram. CSA members often use similar hashtags<sup>12</sup> (key word search terms used on social media) and tag (identify the

---

<sup>12</sup> To make this document accessible to those using screen readers, all multi-word hashtags have been edited to be in Camel Case. Camel Case hashtags have the first letter of each word capitalized.



farm by using their social media handle, or name) the CSA share they are a member of. These hashtags can be found in both posts (an image or short video with accompanying text and hashtags on the main page of the poster, maintained until deleted by the poster) and stories (temporary posts which disappear after a day or two, usually composed of images or short videos, text, and hashtags, sometimes accompanied by music and graphics). I tracked hashtags used by both the operators and the members, following top and recent posts over the course of the CSA season. I followed the following hashtags. In brackets, you will find the number of posts as of March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 associated with each hashtag (number of posts provided by Instagram): #6farms1box (5posts), #LoveOntarioOrganic (416), #VeggieBox (15480), #OntarioOrganic (416), #CSA2019 (1822), #WholeFarmCSA (202), #OrganicOttawa (519), #CSAmembers (395), #CSAveggies (2655), #CSAprogram (870), #CSAbox (9786), #OttawaVeg (1466), #EatLocalOttawa (462), #OttawaFarms (1024), #CSAlife (3793), #OttawaFarmersMarket (5615), #PanierBioGatineau (54), #CommunitySupportedAgriculture (60106), #CSAottawa (76), #CSA (732, 559 – but football fans also use this hashtag so not all are related to Community Supported Agriculture), #OttawaCSA (214), #CSAshares (667), #CSAshare (5868), #RegenerativeAgriculture (494), #CSAday2018 (139), and #CSAday (7842). I took screenshots of 2679 stories and 265 posts, for a total of 2944 screenshots.

Owing to the volume of posts collected between November 28, 2018, to February, 21, 2020, I reviewed them in February, 2020 to organize and synthesize. To allow a visual medium like Instagram to translate, I employed the accessibility feature of image description used to make photography accessible in text form. I copied and pasted any accompanying text alongside the image descriptions. In reviewing the posts, I got a feel for the issues over the course of the farming year. The images and accompanying text capture many visual themes. Similar hashtags

are often used, or the farm is tagged in pictures depicting shares in social media posts. I kept posts relating to practices, text – that is, how people talk, write, and post about what they do, and material impact - the evaluation of material changes by members and farmers.

In determining which ones are significant, I did not include the following unless it related to practices, text, or material impact:

- most explicit advertising text; our CSA shares are now open, for example, is a common one in February and March, branded t-shirts for sale, 3 days left to order,
- pictures of the weekly share unless the text contains more than “week 22 share” for example
- we are at Market X on X date
- we are hiring posts (I have included one as a sample)
- generic engagement posts (what is your favorite place to enjoy cider, what is your favorite way to cook eggplant, what is your favorite veggie, name the calf)
- some of the bucolic lifestyle posts (I have included some as examples to limit the number of picturesque shots of snow-covered fields)
- farms that are CSA adjacent (for example, A farm participated in the large multi-farm share, but they do not have their own CSA. I had collected posts because they participated but unless it specifically references the CSA share, I excluded the post)
- some of the origin stories (for example, the farmers met on ranch camp).
- some of the side hustles (farmers that also run yoga classes and writing classes).
- humour (for example, women should have the confidence of \$7 raspberries)
- Happy New Year/Merry Christmas/Happy Holidays/Happy Solstice/Happy Halloween/Happy Thanksgiving Posts
- Some of the Personal Time posts (games night, weddings, etcetera, I have included some but not all).
- Top 9 pictures posts
- Recipes and serving suggestions
- Produce Porn (look at these delicious mangoes)
- Marketing Questions (Would you like it if we sold frozen raspberries?)
- Posts about kids, babies being born
- Multiples (to avoid having many shots of deliveries, for example).

The remaining image descriptions and accompanying text, including hashtags, resulted in a word document of 101 pages (39, 719 words) which was uploaded to NVivo and coded.

Interview transcripts and social media text with image descriptions were uploaded to NVivo for inductive coding. These documents were read to identify common themes in multiple passes. From these themes, a list of forty-four preliminary codes were developed. These

preliminary codes served two purposes: the basis of a reciprocal document for farmers to thank them for their involvement which provided them with a summary of preliminary findings and creating the code book for further coding of the data. Then the texts were read to code these themes, with attention to the practices involved in CSA participation, commentary on those practices, and evaluation of those practices.

Additionally, over the course of the project, other data was collected and reviewed. Participatory observation involved the reading of weekly emails from various CSA. Participatory observation also involved navigating and assessing websites and other accompanying information to make choices about which CSA to participate in. CSA websites detail histories and farming practices, host newsletters and recipes, and provide links to social media sites. Owing to a saturation of themes, these additional data points (newsletters, weekly emails, websites) were not uploaded and coded in NVivo, although these sources informed my understanding of and participation in CSA. The ethics review number for this research is S-04-19-3480, and ethics approval was granted on 13-05-2019.

**Chapter 4: Practices - Doing the Discourse**

When people participate in Community Supported Agriculture, in what kind of practices do they engage? What activities are required to run or to join a CSA? These were the questions which grounded the inquiry of this chapter. Social media posts from Instagram, interviews with participants, and participatory observation were used to answer these questions and inform this chapter. Analysis of the results of these methods have produced several themes which I have grouped into eight categories: Teaching practices, Relational practices, Food practices, Health practices, Complementary Sustainability Practices, Farming Practices, Coping Practices, and Social Movement practices. These groups of practices are not an exhaustive list of everything required or included in CSA participation; rather, they provide a broad overview of some larger groupings of practices associated with CSA participation.

**Teaching Practices**

Members and farmers spend a lot of time explaining their practices to others, teaching others how to do these practices, and providing embodied experiential learning opportunities so these practices can be reproduced. Every farmer interviewed discussed the importance of education and training. Sixteen of the member interviewees are parents. Of these interviewees, eight discussed CSA participation as a means for teaching their kids about “part of a knowledge of the world to know more about the way that food is grown and how it's done and that it takes the effort, the resources” (M10) and that “this is a good—a good practice” (M20) and “to be proper stewards of that environment” (M15). Three of the parents discussed learning from their adult children, explaining that their kids expanded their understandings “our daughter is always like ten steps ahead of me in any of this” (M19). Adult children “call us on things and make us you know greener and more aware. That's a good thing, too” (M6). Adult children are “a huge

influence over our lives in so many ways . . . [who have] experienced it [CSA]” (M18). One parent of adult children did not mention education as a goal but discussed their own education of the food system and nutrition through reading and learning from experts (M14). Another parent with children at home who did not mention education of their child, emphasised their own desire to learn about the food system: “if time was limitless, spend time along beside them (the farmers) and see how they do what they do. Cause you can always learn more about it” (M3). Only three parents did not mention education in their interviews.

Of the ten nonparent members, all save two mentioned education as being an importance component of the CSA experience. The importance of the education provided by the farmers (M1), education on the organic certification process and the farming system (M5), learning new cooking methods (M11, M24) or about new food products (M16), or the challenges of organic farming (M2) were some of the ways that interviewees noted how education played a role in their experience. One member noted the role of their own education in graduate school on “food politics and local food, local food distribution networks” (M11) on their choices. Another member observed that “I have not only learned at school about environmental issues, but later on, I learned about social issues in the food system” explaining that this shaped their choices (M9). Another member noted that their graduate school education in the environment pushed them to “lead by example in a lot of ways . . . . I can show other people or tell other people about it and see that these are options” (M4). Of the thirty-six interviewees, thirty-one explained that education, of themselves, of their children, of others, plays a role in their CSA participation.

Whether it is a farmer explaining their farming practices to a member, or a member explaining their food practices to family, CSA participants spend time describing what they are doing and why. Both members and farmers explain to others what they are doing and why they

are doing it. For members we see this in three areas, the promotion of CSA on social media, the explanation and justification of their practices to family members and recommending CSA to others. Community Supported Agriculture involves a lot of explaining practices to others.

*Explaining practices to others*

CSA members and farmers explain what they are doing to others. Choosing practices related to CSA or complementary to CSA often involves explaining those choices. One member explains this work:

it's kind of against the grain in a lot of ways and so I certainly know, there's a lot of things that I don't have time for and so some, and then friends or acquaintances will find out, that I do something else. Like you have time to grind grain but you don't have time to you know, x, y, z. But it's just because of what I personally prioritize. But I have to remind myself, about that priority often. Because it takes time and it's you kind of have to keep choosing it because it's not always convenient. And we're definitely live in a society of people wanting convenience. So, I find those things challenging. I find those challenging to explain fully to my children and I think that's going to come even more challenging when they're teenagers (M23).

In the discussions about time trade-offs, the discussion centres around:

the food versus, like finding, you know, having spent some time online and find out what's happening in the community and going to do something. Or versus you know, going shopping for back to school or going you know, whatever the case maybe, going out to do whatever or sitting and relaxing or watching TV or what, anything else that's not food related. I guess, I spend a lot of time on food. But again, it's also a choice that I, that I feel kind of you know, I feel happy to be able to do that, too, at the same time, so (M23).

Recommendation is very important for CSA. The recommendation of a colleague (M21) or someone with a shared value system plays a role in choosing to participate in a CSA: “because of the friendship we have, and just how much I value that person's opinion, we just went for it” (M20). Finding a CSA that's a “good fit” often involves the recommendation of a friend (M24).

The practice of members promoting the farm to friends is explained by a farmer:

you ideally get loyal customers come back every year. And it really limits the amount of marketing and effort we have to put into it. But you're also developing champions—that is, people that really, you know, share and champion your products to other people all the time. Which is extremely valuable for any business. But you know, more for any business that has very slim profit margins, like a farm (F6).

Explaining CSA to others involves explaining why to do this instead of that, explaining those practices to family (I cannot do that, because I do this, here's why), and promoting those practices to others (you should try this too, here's why). These practices occur in both in-person and on social media.

Farmers also describe themselves, explaining the characteristics of their farm and what practices they engage with on the farm. One way that farmers do this is via introduction posts. Introduction posts are common on Instagram and consist of a short biographical statement introducing the farm (this format is not limited to agriculture, but I will explain it using terms relevant to the CSA experience), who works on the farm, the history of the farm, what the farm values, what they grow, etcetera. These introduction posts are repeated over the course of the year to introduce the farm to new followers or to commemorate a special event, such as purchasing land. Some farms repost introductions with the same information, others write new accompanying text and provide new pictures with each introduction post. Introduction posts serve as a means for reminding followers about the core values of the farm as well as the type of content followers can expect to see, what topics will be covered on social media, what topics or areas will be explained, and what you can learn about by following the farm. Ruralroots gives us an example of an introduction post in which we learn about how the farmers met, what they like to do, what the secret to a happy marriage is (he makes coffee before she gets up, sounds about right to me!), and about their child (Heidi, n.d.). There's a cultivation of intimacy in these posts. Johnsonfamilyorchards notes that you can support "your local female sustainable farmer" (Johnson Family Orchards, n.d.). The following example is one among multiple posts over the course of the year in which Ferme Agricola introduces themselves. In this instance, Ferme Agricola introduces themselves again to celebrate purchasing a farm:



We have some very exciting news to share: we bought a farm! ✨ This is a dream many years in the making. 13 years ago, the four of us met during our first year of university in Halifax. 10 years ago, we started dreaming, idealistically and not-at-all-realistically, about farming and living together one day. 2 years ago, we started talking seriously about starting a business together, and looking for land to farm on, and 1 year ago, we visited a magical asparagus farm in Petite-Nation, which has been built by Guy-Louis Poncelet and his family over the past 40 years. Today, we signed the papers to buy the farm of our dreams! From the moment we visited the property, we were enchanted with the beauty, diversity and history that exists within this ecosystem - so much of which is thanks to the vision of Guy-Louis. He has built a truly special natural place, and we are grateful to be able to build on his work. Over the past year, we've also gained an incredible mentor and friend, a relationship that has meant more than we could have imagined. We have been so lucky to be met by such powerful support throughout the whole process, more than we can name right now. Thank you to our parents, friends, families and communities, as well as to the many individuals and organizations we've worked with to help us realize this dream. We recognize that caring for this land will be a life-long project, and we're so excited for the next phase of this adventure! ❤️ (Ferme Agricola, n.d.). [ID: Series of shots, first of four young farmers (3F, 1M) and an older M farmer at a table. Then various shots of the farm, and the farmers with Guy-Louis].

Farmers get people to purchase their products by explaining the characteristics of the farm.

Some farmers define these characteristics by showcasing the working conditions the farmers experience. A “fair celery” (salary) is important (Ferme BeetBox Farm #OttCity, n.d.). [ID: Sign with text: “Our farmers get a fair celery. Support local, www.beetbox.ca” with a picture of celery]. Farmers also explain why their farm is different from other farms, often based on farming practices. As Biosauvagefarms asserts, not all farming practices are equal and saving the planet involves choosing the right practices: “I see a lot of "organic" farms using a LOT of plastics, and extreme amounts of nutrients. This is BAD for the soil, the worms, and all around bad for the natural ecosystems. Just because you are permitted, doesn't mean you should” (Mountain Man, n.d.). [ID: Cartoon of two farms, one with hazmat suits spraying and the other with lots of green and people]. Promotion also includes encouraging members and potential members to engage in specific food practices and to choose a farm based on farming practices.

Petes.greens encourages everyone to:

Make every day Earth Day by making thoughtful choices with your food dollars. Choose to buy produce that is grown organically, grown with the season, travels few miles from farm to plate, and is part of a system that regenerates our soil, cleans our water, freshens our air, protects our pollinators, and utilizes the full extent of our natural resources (Pete’s Greens, n.d.). [ID: Collage of three pictures, farmer in field, sign for fresh, local tomatoes, and sunflowers].

Rootedoakfarm promotes practices for both farmers and eaters:

As ecological farmers we are proud to be doing our part to save this planet we all call home. We strive to use practices that leave the soil better than we found it and take our stewardship of the land seriously. As an eater you can make choices that have a positive effect on the environment; you can choose to buy food from a farmer who practices regenerative agriculture, to buy local food, and eat seasonally. Every step towards a local farmer is a step away from an unsustainable food system and by deepening your connection to where your food comes from you are supporting a movement of like-minded people that are climate change warriors. #FightBack #EarthDay2019 #EarthDayOttawa 🌍🌍🌍 (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). [ID: Picture of 2 M farmers in front of a greenhouse, a farm dog, and a picture of a worm in a hand.]

Sometimes the promotion of practices involves making those practices visible; Crophornefarm highlights the work of women who farm, work which is not always visible:

Crophorne is proud to be a woman-owned, women-led farm and currently our farm crew is 100% lady farmers. 3 little notes on #IWD Nothing makes me prouder than knowing our daughters (and now son!) view this vocation as nothing out of the normal. I love seeing our Westham Island neighbours in a big ol' tractor ripping down the road about to slay it in the field. #solidarity (looking at you @kateandherboys @westhamislandherbfarm !!!) 🚜🚜 (Lydia at Crophorne Farm, n.d.). [ID: A collage of four pictures of women on the farm, two with children, harvesting eggs, in the greenhouse, in front of a tractor, and in front of a combine. Text “Proud to be farmers on IWD”].

Farmers explain who they are and what they provide throughout their social media and broader marketing presence, however, some posts engage with more explicit marketing practices. Both farmers and members explain their practices verbally and via social media.

### *Education and Skills*

Farmers teach and learn, as well as celebrating skills and education. On social media, posts discussed skills acquisition and transfer, continuing education, and the relationship between education and shifting understandings. In interviews, every single farmer discussed the importance of education Arc\_acres celebrates Canadian Agricultural Day with a call for farmers to engage in the practices of sharing their knowledge, connecting people to the land (Regenerative Agriculture & Permaculture Farm, n.d.). Spreadsheetmaniac talks about holding off on starting their own farm until they could intern with a farm that used draft animals to learn about horses early in their career (Farmer Spreadsheet Academy, n.d.), fermelevetot talks about their January reading list which includes a wide range of skills from risk management for not-for-profit organizations to organic mushroom farming (Ferme Léve-tôt, n.d.). Knowledge acquisition also involves shifting perspectives. Fermeetforet shares learning about bee-centered instead of human-centered bee keeping:

how can we be of service to the honeybee, how can we best support her? Asking ourselves these questions requires a major shift in beekeeping as we know it which generally focuses on the human needs (how can we get more honey, more pollination, etc) (Ferme et Forêt, n.d.). [ID: Five pictures of different styles of hives and one of misty hills].

There is also a celebration of skills, for example, arc\_acres talks about the skills of her butcher Eric and, in another post, about learning cooking techniques to share with customers (Regenerative Agriculture & Permaculture Farm, n.d.). Grazingdays celebrates Paul's herding skills as he sorts cattle:

Seeing his calm composure as he respectfully works solo with a herd of 170 cattle, using nothing but a reel of wire (electrified or not), a few temporary fence posts and his voice to get cows and their calves to one field and yearlings off to another. His mathematical understanding of how to get a herd from point A to B--across roads, valleys, culverts and hills--paired with the herd's clear understanding of his simple, calm and confident dutch instructions make for an almost magical sight. It sure is

something to witness this skill. And how heartwarming knowing that this is the work that regenerative agriculture requires of her farmers (Grazingdays, n.d.)

The celebration of education and skills extends to sharing skills and education with others. Farms also actively participate in providing education to students from the primary through the secondary levels. Carleton University visited grazingdays for Carleton University's "4th year seminar on Localizing Food Systems. We [Grazing Days] are grateful for opportunities to talk about regenerative farming, the importance of local food, and carbon sequestration" (Grazingdays, n.d.). Alska\_farm also hosted Carleton university students: "to learn about livestock production and the regenerative agriculture we practice." (Ferme Älska Farm, n.d.). Fatchancefarmstead explains how they will be touring schools to teach them about local vegetable production (Fat Chance Farmstead, n.d.). Farmers are keen to share their knowledge and to celebrate the knowledge of others. There is a celebration of many epistemologies in farming. The skill sets required to survive as a farm and do-right by the environment are celebrated by farmers.

*Parenting*

Parenting for both farmers and members involves a cluster of practices, many of which involve explaining or teaching. For farmers, parenting involves both engaging children in life on a farm, explaining farming practices to them, and balancing farming with parenting demands.

Fatchancefarmstead muses about engaging a four-year-old in farming:

It's going to be a careful balance to keep him [four-year-old child planting garlic] interested but not irritated by me 😊. If I want his continued involvement on the farm I think the trick will be to always have work available to him, but if he doesn't want to do it, that's fine (Fat Chance Farmstead, n.d.).

Farm chores, such as bottle-feeding calves, are more fun when the farm kids are “proudly and confidently” able to help, as observed by grazingdays (Grazingdays, n.d.). Balancing the early days of parenting is something that goodheartfarmstead shares about:

Farm mamas: how has your relationship to farming changed since you had kids? What struggles and challenges have you faced? What beauty and joy have you discovered? . . . Every summer is a recalibration as he grows and the farm grows. Being a mom and a farmer feels at times deeply gratifying and other times near impossible . . . (Katie Spring, n.d.) [ID: Female farmer operating a scythe while babywearing a child on her back].

We see here the delicate negotiation of engaging children with farm life and farm chores, the satisfaction and joy with watching them explore these chores, and the strain from trying to balance parenting and farming. This balance of parenting and farming, sometimes requires pulling back from farming for a time:

What would our farms need to look like in order to provide employment that didn't ask too much of a pregnant person? What does it mean for our scale and type of farming that it requires lots of manual labour and a lot of stress for farm managers? Is there such thing as a balanced life for a farm-family? I have many musings. For now I realize what it means for me personally- I am no longer willing to be a full-time farmer. It would have been easy for me to not say anything about this personal evolution. Our farm is still going to do its' thing, and I'll be parenting most of the time. But if I am honest- it is important to me to let others know that this is a choice I've made for myself. If I wanted to be most productive for my farm I could put my child in childcare

and work on the farm more. But that would not be right for me . . . ("Occasional Farmer") Bethany (Zócalo Community Farm, n.d.). [ID: Picture of a farm stand].

Caring for small children requires a shift in reproductive labour but also introduces an opportunity for the joy of feeding those small children: “\*My niece eating lettuce during harvest yesterday. \*She chomped it down faster than I could get my camera out! \*This, this is why we grow food - because it feels so good to feed others!” (Stacy, n.d.). [ID: A child eating lettuce]. Caring for children also provides an opportunity for teaching children about harvesting. Twinkletoesfarm shows their daughter learning about anatomy, slaughtering chickens, and “the gravity of taking another life to sustain your own” (Monica Anderson Burnison, n.d.).

For members, parenting involves more explaining and modeling practices to children. Sixteen of the member interviewees are parents. Of these interviewees, eight discussed CSA participation as a means for teaching their kids and three of the parents discussed learning from their adult children. Modeling is a way of explaining practices and values that are important to parents:

it was really just that the idea of modeling. That, you know, we have to—if we want our kids do keep doing this, then we have to make sure we're doing it. And even if it's hard, find a way. Because... because that way, then it will be part of who they are. To buy from local—you know, local farmers and to buy products—produce that—you know, that, there's—the chemicals are not used in the same way they are on other farms. And so, that was—that idea of showing them the way that this is a good—a good practice (M20).

We see here, parents want to show their kids what “good practice(s)” are. We can see here that “good” is inclusive of purchasing from local producers who are not using chemicals for this parent. Parents do it “for” their kids so that they understand food:

[comes] from the farmer down the road, as opposed to the grocery store . . . that it's a privilege to eat food that's grown locally. And that there's difference between that and the food that comes out of a can, or the food that comes in a refrigerator truck from

another part of the world . . . I think it's important for a children to grow up knowing that—you know, how food is grown, and what can be grown locally, and what has to come further away. And hopefully, that helps them make environmentally sound choices along the road (M22).

Parents are layering understandings of the food system: food comes from people and people's labour (the farmer down the road), not a company (the grocery store), and there is a preference for food that is not prepared, that has not travelled, and these preferences are linked with making environmentally sound choices. We also see that parents are attentive to privilege in the food system. Parental education encompasses socializing practices, such as purchasing local food, as well as an understanding of how that local food system operates:

it's also nice to show our children—to introduce them a little bit more intimately to how a farm works . . . just part of a knowledge of the world to know more about the way that food is grown and how it's done and that it takes the effort, the resources. And so this is a great way, I think, of having them both meet the farmers, see the farm (M10).

Parents explain that understanding local food systems also encompasses making visible the work that is associated with food production. Parents highlight the labour and resources that are required to produce food. Parents cultivate a practice of gratitude for the labour and resources that are necessary for food production. Parents hope to:

to socialize her a little bit about where food comes from and what kind of effort is involved in creating the food, and being grateful to the farmers who are producing the food for us and really sacrificing a lot that the rest of us to have actively chosen not to sacrifice for convenience (M25, M26).

Parents are modeling food procurement practices, as well as knowledge acquisition practices. Parents demonstrate that knowledge is acquired by going into the field and seeing food production for yourself, experiencing food production for yourself. Parents provide epistemological training about how to source knowledge, how to be aware of the limits of our knowledge, how to discuss acquired knowledge critically, and how to maintain mindfulness

about their participation in sourcing and consuming food. This parent explains how they incorporate epistemological training into dinner discussions:

all of the farms where we buy things from, we've gone to see. And we've met the farmers and we talked to them . . . I will still go buy bacon sometimes and then I'll, we'll have a discussion at our table about "You know what? This was actually like just kind of grocery store bacon and you know, we don't know much about how this pig was raised." And you know, we have these kind of conversations. Because I just, I think it's good to be, I guess, I just think it's good to be mindful . . . to know what they're eating and make decisions based on knowledge (M23).

Modeling for and educating children is a practice that parents participating in the CSA feel is both enjoyable and important: "it's also nice to show our children—to introduce them a little bit more intimately to how a farm works" (M10). Modeling for children was important enough that it was a motivator for some parents to join the CSA:

I think part of the impetus was to use it as a teaching aid for the kids . . . I just wanted to explore that awareness of the food cycle with them. And just their eagerness to be on board with all these was really exciting. So, I think that education was one of the big drives (M21).

This modeling involves experiential practice in which both the children and parents engage:

now that we have a young child, too, it's also connecting her, so she comes with me to pick up the farm share and she gets to pick which of each type of vegetable and put them in a bag and talk to the farmer (M25, M26).

Parents highlight the role of knowledge in making good decisions about food practices. Parents emphasize experiential learning, critical thinking, attentiveness to privilege, attentiveness to the labour and resources required for food production, and food procurement practices when they model for their children. Parents also use hands-on participation in CSA to educate their children.

However, such practices with children are not without challenges. Sometimes modeling is challenging in a society "of people wanting convenience" – it is difficult to explain to children why we take a slower or more time-intensive path (M23). Children impact both motivation for



CSA participation as well as introducing time constraints to that participation. Time for cooking and being creative has been reduced since having children due to time devoted to childcare responsibilities (M15, M20 – a couple who interviewed separately). Thus, while parents are motivated to model good food practices for their children, they have less time to be creative in the kitchen after having children. Balancing food provisioning and preparing with other responsibilities is challenging: “when you're a mom with two young ones and you're away full time, so you can only invest so much into the, your cooking journey” (M21). Children shift the time constraints: “we had our children—a big shift in our life, in terms of speed at which we wanted to move. Which includes food” (M20). Some other challenges noted by parents included that their children have different preferences from themselves and from each other in multi-child households so balancing those preferences can be challenging (M15, & M22): “So, the kids have definitely been... probably the biggest challenge” (M22). However, other parents found there were fewer challenges with personal preferences: “I don't remember any pickiness in terms of rejecting any of the foods” (M21).

Time constraints of having young children make it challenging to “prepare a lot of foods, like slow foods and whatnot. So, we were being very adventurous [chuckles] with the kales and the scapes and things like that. Then it slowly slowed down because life kind of interfered with the trying to be adventurous” (M15). The caring time crunch was not unique to parents, children of aging parents felt it too. For members with aging parents who require more caregiving, there are constraints placed on their time and “emotional energy” leaving less in reserve for pursuing their life goals around food: “that part of our lives is push and pull, and... and we're kind of stuck in the middle. Because we—we have to be there. But we can't lose track of where we're going at the same time, too” (M18). However, the caring crunch presented by aging parents did

not involve modelling as it does with children, rather we see a negotiation between the food practices of adult children and their elderly parents as mentioned in the section on relational work.

Parenting shifts practices associated with CSA participation for both farmers and members. Farmers balance the demands of parenting with the demands of farming which shifts how they practice farming. Parents balance the demands of parenting with the demands of food preparation which shifts how they practice cooking. Socializing children into the foodscape of CSA is a practice that parents who are CSA members and who are farmers do. This involves teaching via the socialization and modeling of eating food, sourcing food, and producing food.

### Relational practices

The sense of connection and the work done to maintain that connection was striking in interviews even before the data was coded. Out of thirty-six interviewees, only three did not mention connection, community, or relationships (one farmer and two members). Nine of the ten farmers interviewed emphasised the importance of cultivating community and connection. One farmer noted that social interactions “lift me up to go back to the farm to do the hard work, during the week”(F1). Another farmer noted:

“not to be like too sentimental about it, but, you know, I think the thing is, like, there is real value in making that connection with people. Even regardless of growing food but just on like, a humanity-level, kind of thing” (F2).

Farmers talked about the “relationship that we have [with members]” (F4), the “connection” to people (F5), “really building a community” (F6), “the relationship and understanding” (F7), “how our customers all feel like our friends” (F8), the “very close involvement in their [members’] lives” (F9), and operating a “community farm” (F10).

Twenty-four of the twenty-six member interviewees discussed connection, relationships, and community in the context of CSA participation. The embeddedness of farmers in their communities is evident in members who talked about how they connected to their CSA through existing community connections (M23, M24, M15, M3), referred others to their CSA (M16), and evaluated CSA along with their community members (M26). Members noted the importance of farm days, on farm events, and work parties to cultivating community even though they did not attend them (M13, M9, M16, M17, and M10 - who attended events). Trust was a component of the farmer-member relationship (M6, M7, M9). Members noted the positive sense of connection with other CSA members: “a social identity and pride in the little community of people who support CSA and kind of do what is back-patting and feeling like we are doing our little part to

try to do something good within the life choices that we've made" (M25); "to feel like, you know, all these other people are doing this . . . And know that we're all in this kind of together with the farmers. And that we—it matters that we're part of that community. It's a better community that we get to kind of... be part of" (M20); "feeling like you're participating in a greater good. Sounds ethereal but just feeling that the whole nature of a cooperative feels just that, that you are working together with other like-minded people which is heartening" (M21); and "although we do not have a community that we—that we are part of, I think we're part of a global community, of people who are just... re-organising their lives" (M18).

When asked if there are social benefits to CSA participation, members responded with building community: "[CSA] builds community . . . I know it's not sexy, but I think like it accomplishes like improving local economies which includes communities, which includes lifestyle of the farm, of the farmers" (M1); "certainly helps to sort of foster community and social sort of networks [this] . . . fits with a small farm business model to be part of a community and sort of be the, perhaps that connecting force for people" (M3); "social cohesion building" (M4); and "promote[s] a sense of community" (M24).

Members often described the connection cultivated through CSA as a personal one. One member described how they like the "personal aspect so like knowing who is making my food and be able to support them directly, financially" (M5). Another noted "knowing who my farmer is, is actually has an impact on how I perceive more of my actions which will lead to be more responsible when it comes to environmental stuff" (M6). This relationship "with the person who is producing my food. And that, for me, is... a different kind of security, I guess. I just—I appreciate the food more because of that. I know the person who's worked hard to produce it" (M22). Another member noted that small CSA allow for "more of a human connection" (M15).

The strength of this theme throughout the interviews was striking given the absence of new connections forged between members during CSA participation. The importance of connection is evident in the time devoted to relational practices and the impact of these relational practices on other CSA practices.

Farmers and members engage in practices to maintain their relationships. Relational practices include the social niceties of maintaining relationships with other farmers, the communication work that is required to maintain relationships with members, remembering names and faces, remembering the names of family members, remembering who likes dark leafy greens, and connecting with people on an intellectual and emotional level. Farmers who operate CSA engage in a lot of relational practices such as remembering names, remembering faces, and maintaining social connections (Field notes, July 4, 2019). For members, relational practices include navigating and negotiating different value systems between adult children and their parents or other family members, or between friends; for example, a vegetarian couple visiting with in-laws who eat meat (M19).

Farmers perhaps carry the bulk of these practices in relation to CSAs as they maintain relationships with all their members, but members also do relational work. Some of the relational work members noted involved negotiating dietary or lifestyle changes with their family members. For example, if family members do not share the same food goals, such as vegetarianism, this negotiation can be challenging: “I mean, my mother has yet to come around. She doesn't even know I'm doing this. She knows I'm doing the CSA. She doesn't know I'm—I'm not eating meat. She thinks getting the CSA—she thinks that's wonderful” (M19). When friends or acquaintances do not share the same priorities, these relationships create tension between different priorities and force members to re-commit to goals:

And pressures because it's not, it's kind of against the grain in a lot of ways and so I certainly know, there's a lot of things that I don't have time for and so some, and then friends or acquaintances will find out, that I do something else. Like you have time to grind grain but you don't have time to you know, x, y, z. But it's just because of what I personally prioritize. But I have to remind myself, about that priority often. Because it takes time and it's you kind of have to keep choosing it because it's not always convenient (M23).

Through this quotation we see that members do relational work with their family and friends, explaining their choices, and negotiating tensions relating to having different priorities from their friends and family.

Farmers engage in a lot of relational practices. Cultivating relationships with members requires several different relational practices, such as encouraging farm visits, expressing gratitude to members, maintaining connection with members, introducing the farm, their practices, and history to members, and maintaining farm-to-farm relationships. Encouraging members to visit the farm is a portion of relational work on social media. Farms often host farm days or volunteer harvests. In the autumn of 2017, when the kids were small, we attended a farm day co-hosted by three local CSA on farms that do maple syrup, foraging, vegetables, and some livestock. We got to poke around in the boiling shed where the sap is turned into maple syrup. We saw chickens, sheep, pigs, horses, and a sheep shearing demonstration. We walked through the fields and the tomato tunnels. There was squash being barbequed, fresh sumac-ade to drink, and you could buy other snacks to eat. There was a little pop-up shop to purchase items from other neighbouring farms, like fresh mushrooms, in one of the barns. There is a very exploratory feel to these events, a glimpse into how farm life is, with a very festive, fair-like, bucolic atmosphere. The sheep shearer was a talented entertainer, able to talk while working cleanly and quickly. There is music playing. People are milling about, sitting on hay bales and on the grass, and kids running around. There is also that beautiful sense of expansive space that the city lacks.

The horizons are further away, and you are nestled among rolling hills. These events are a very pleasurable way to spend a sunny October afternoon. These events were mentioned as being important by multiple members, but few attended (M13, M9, M16, M17 noted the importance but only M10 had attended). For example, Csggenesisfarm puts out a call for volunteers for carrot harvesting and, in another post, they ask folks to bring a dish for the potluck and join them for their harvest festival (The CSG at Genesis Farm, n.d.). Farmgatecider says that they love providing tours and tastings; they encourage people to come see behind the scenes and chat with the cider makers (Farmgate Cider, n.d.). Fermeetforet thanks all those who contributed to their Farm Stop, an open house day, including the visitors:

And last but not least, thanks to you, neighbors, customers, friends and family who came out on such a grey day. Thank you for voting with your dollars by pruchasing (sic) the food and fibre grown and foraged here on the farm. You are the ones that keep it going here, and that makes this type of agriculture possible (Ferme et Forêt, n.d.).

Farmers express gratitude and appreciation for their members throughout the season:

We are so dang lucky to have happened into this community who supports us, who knows us, and who cheers for us. I thought I was ready for market season to end (and I am looking forward to that sleep -in), but darn it if I'm not going to miss our customers. See you next year, and thank you from the bottom of our hearts (Taylor & Jake Mendell, n.d.).

We see from these social media posts an acknowledgement of the relationships between farms and members, expressions of gratitude, education of all ages, and closing the gap between producers and customers. As observed by a farmer with a beef and pork CSA: “one of the most important parts is also for me is having that connection with my consumers” (F1). These relational practices are framed by farmers as an effort to counter the separation between farmers and consumers that exists in the larger food system outside of CSA: “And I think that there was a time when maybe we lived in smaller place—smaller dwellings where we would know the person who's selling us, and we've just grown to this point, we just don't know the person who's

doing it” (F10). Communication between the farmers and members closes the geographical distance and demonstrates to members that the farms engage with knowledge-based practices. Communication also cultivates trust that farmers are engaged in knowledge-based practices. As explained by a member: “I trust these guys and I just know they're doing the best they can possibly do and so I just kind of feel confident that the social, environmental outcomes are being achieved” (M2).

We also see relational practices between farmers. This is evident in social media posts from CSA farmers in the Ottawa Valley. Grazingdays highlights the relational practices that farmers do to maintain connections with other farmers as well as the sharing of labour done by farmers to help each other in multiple posts (Grazingdays, n.d.). We see similar posts from the neighbour of Grazingdays, Fermeagricola. Both farms highlight their shared relationship as they are neighbours and help each other (Ferme Agricola, n.d.). This relationship work includes business collaborations such as the following one described by Against the Grain Farm:

Every two weeks we proudly participate in the @rootsandshootsfarm Grain Share. Check them out - making good things happen!  
 #local #AncientGrains #HeritageGrains #Agroecology #SustainableFarming  
 #SeedSovereignty #FreeTheSeed #AgainstTheGrainFarms (n.d.). [ID: Picture of Roots and Shoots logo (sketch of carrots in the ground) and their website rootsandshootsfarm.com].

We also see that relationships between farms involve pitching in to help with infrastructure, like skinning a greenhouse (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.), or pitching in by helping with livestock: “Nikki is looking after our neighbours @grazingdays cows while they are away on vacation!” (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). Social media content suggests that farmers frequently help each other, taking care of each other’s farms to allow for vacation, pitching in with infrastructure development, collaborating on business ventures, as well as intergenerational knowledge transfer as farms change hands. There are a lot of relationship practices to cultivate the relationships among



farmers. The posting about these relationship practices on social media demonstrates the embeddedness of farmers in their local communities as well as practices they deploy to embed in their local communities. One farmer talks about partnering with farms for meat, as many CSA do (F7), another farmer talks about hiring another farmer to do meat wrapping (F1). There's a lot of networking among farms and a lot of relationships built there. One member noted this in an interview:

“something that I didn't expect when I was going in was to see the relationship between the farmers so. Like [Name of Farm] making the meat share available from their neighboring farm. And this year they started doing partnering with a, like wheat farm. So they're offering flour and wheat berries and stuff. So that's something that it's nice to be made available, interesting to see how . . . the farmers engage with their neighbouring farms” (M5).

In interviews and participant observation, farmers often discuss other farms that are doing well, for example advertising that ‘so-and-so’ has a strong social media presence (Field Notes on the Go, July 30, 2019) or ‘so-and-so’ has farming practices that the farmer can vouch for (Field Notes on the Go, August 8, 2019).

*Getting Started: Making the switch and doing the research*

How do CSA members sign up for CSA in the first place? What are the practices involved in making the switch from the grocery store or farmers' markets to CSA participation? CSA participation requires signing up and showing up. When asked how they came to choose CSA, members described an iterative process over a few years influenced by friends and family, involving self-reflection, fine-tuning of goals, and research.

Family members influence the shift to CSA. The role that existing relationships play in transition is significant:

Over the last couple of years, we've been gradually shifting to a healthier eating style. And [Adult Daughter's name] said, "Well, why don't you try the CSA?" You know, we were doing farmers' markets. And you know. We were just moving direction. And she says, "Why don't you do this?" So, I looked him up, and found him, and contacted him. And we got set up. And we go every two weeks to pick up our vegetables (M19).

Members describe the layering of events that get them to the point of choosing CSA. There are multiple factors influencing their trajectory towards CSA including childhood influences, such as parenting, through engaging with the world critically, to purposively deciding how they want to be in the world:

Started thinking on that wavelength, of... just supporting local people and eating stuff that kind of, you know, comes close—you know, really people care about how they grow it, and all that kind of stuff, so.... Sort of, I'd say a long trajectory of—throughout this, being critical about myself and the—within the world, and... people around me and how I'm living, like, from a young age, because of the way my mom... worked with us . . . the brother with diabetes, and just—being an athlete as well—as a high-performance athlete. And so, there's always a focus on the body. So, eating was part of that, and... And then, my university, sort of, experiences, and my—my own studies and my own work, and then meeting [partner's name], and then moving through thinking about the ways in which we wanted to be as a couple in the world really shaped where we are today. And that where I'm at—where I am today was my thinking on that (M20).

Of note here is that as adults, several CSA members note the role of their own parents and grandparents in shaping how they view food and model practices for their own children (M10,

M19, M20, M21). We get to see both the ‘input’ and ‘output’ of these modeling practices and inter-generational knowledge transfer.

Farming practices were front and center for some members. For these members, getting to the point of choosing a CSA involved finding a food procurement option that met their requirements for specific farming practices. These members had clear explanations of what practices they preferred and their reasoning for making that choice:

I would say the primary motivation of the CSAs, in particular, was to reduce our carbon footprint in terms of procuring our food and the way the food is grown. And that also kind of comes back to the practices that the farmers used. The amount of our carbon-fuelled equipment that they use, some of the practices in terms of how they rotate their fields, what kind of cover crops they use, how much natural fertilizer, how they manage their water, all that kind of stuff also was important to us and part of the reason why we wanted to support smaller CSA's (M25, M26).

One member describes making the choice to participate in a CSA as part of a larger plan to reduce consumerism and live “a more ethical life”:

the big thing for 2020 is going to be working towards living a more ethical life. I'm starting off with a #NoBuy January to get away from consumerism, but I also have some plans around more farmer's market shopping, getting a CSA membership, improving my mending skills, making more of the things that I need and use, and volunteering for causes I believe in (Jen, n.d.). [ID: A picture of a snow-covered scene from a running path].

These members have come to participate in CSA after a distillation of their goals and the best way to accomplish those goals. This is an iterative process involving self-reflection, critical thinking, the way they were raised, and a prioritization of farming practices.

This process also involves research. Members devote time to learning about both farming and food systems, as well as specific CSA before joining. However, there is quite a range in the depth of research members do before joining a CSA. Some members delve into practices of the companies they hope to purchase from:

we look at the ethics of companies, you know. We look up where is stuff is made, where the materials are coming from . . . or pretty significant research, to make sure we're happy with what we're buying and who we're buying it from, and . . . [with CSA we had] some sort of vision of the landscape, and of who was out there and what they're offering. And then, when that came time, it was—yeah. We thought we'd done enough of it [research] that we can move on with it (M20).

Other members sourced their CSA from existing connections at work, and did not do any comparison shopping or research before joining but did appreciate the affirmation from friends, confirming their choice within their network of friends:

I didn't do any comparison shopping to start with. The terms that he [colleague] described seemed really agreeable to me. And I think in conversation with other people who I knew, some of people I knew actually were also participating in the same cooperative. But I think, I may have spoken to few other people who had different kinds of selections. And I, it affirmed that I found, I thought we with the right person (M21).

Members were often not looking actively for a CSA, but it was an idea that was percolating on the back burner and there were several things that had to fall into place to make it possible. Work colleagues, friends of the farmers, were the point of connection in this case:

I wasn't, like, being diligent about looking for it . . . I, like, did a little bit of searching around. But . . . none of them really fit with my work—like, my schedule. Also, I don't have a car. And in Ottawa, you really need to have a car to get to a lot of places. So . . . then, I was just, like, having a chat with a friend at work one day. And she mentioned that her friends were starting this—that the pick-up was, like, really close to my house. So, that was a—that was probably the biggest factor. So, I wasn't—I wouldn't say I was actively looking or doing any comparison shopping. It was just that . . . it was—I knew it was something I want it to do and couldn't really find the right opportunity when I kind of casually looked before that. And then this one came up and was a good fit (M24).

There is a wide range of research done before members join a CSA from not very much to quite substantial research in advance of joining. Existing relationships are a source of information and sometimes introduce CSA.

*Reducing Food Waste*

Reducing food waste was an important issue for several members (M11, M14, M15, M20, M21, M22, M23, M24, M4). Reducing food waste is a practice members link with their relationships to the farm and the farmer. Members explained that a sense of community responsibility to the farmers who belong to the same community as members do and ownership derived from their purchase of shares in the harvest for that year, drive avoidance of food waste:

So, you—you almost feel like you don't want to—you know, you don't want to let your—it does, I guess, feel like more of a community in that sense. Like you—like, you don't want to let your... community members down by throwing out the food that they have grown (M11).

Members explain not wanting to waste food because of how they feel about their food:

I just feel like a better connectedness to my food. And just kind of a, I mean when I was buying something like peppers or pineapples, like come from far, far away and you just have no connection to the process or who was making it. And I know this way, I know [Names of Farmers] and I see the pictures of how hard they're working to make this food. And so, I feel, like it's very important not to be wasteful. I feel like I'm trying to be far more using every part of the food and only composting when it's absolutely necessary (M4).

Reducing food waste is motivated by the relationship with the farmers and is seen as contributing to health:

Definitely the health benefits to our own diet. The fact that we had all of this fresh produce that we didn't want to go to waste. We'd feel guilty if we did. Because again, that stems from that relationship with the farm. We know that somebody worked hard on it. We place more value on the food that's in the fridge when it comes from—comes out of the food box. And so, we're more motivated to eat those healthy foods. So, I think that's the big one, that we definitely eat more fresh produce when the CSA is going on (M22).

The desire to not waste the food is linked with perceived increase in vegetable consumption which is understood to be a contributor to health (M23). The desire to limit food waste is also motivated by a sense of ownership: “we don't waste food. Because it's yours” (M15 talking about how “owing” the food via the share impacts food waste). Members were not able to reduce food

waste entirely and expressed regret when that happened: “occasionally there would be the odd thing that just would elude me. And sometimes I'd successfully give it a whirl. And then other times, I'm sad to say that it just, it didn't make it to the table” (M21). Sometimes getting through all the food before it spoils is challenging (M15, & M20). Food waste avoidance is an example of a practice that is tied to members' relationship to the farm and is also seen to be a contributor to health by increasing the consumption of vegetables.

## Food Practices

### *Food Procurement and Preparation*

Reproductive labour accounted for some of the practices associated with CSA participation. Members noted that they experienced an unexpected shift in reproductive labour load while participating in CSA: for many members, food procurement was reduced (M10, M11, M12, M13, M16, M18, M3, M5), however, food preparation was increased (M11, M15, M16, M18, M20, M21, M23).

In terms of food procurement, members commented that participating in the CSA reduced their shopping elsewhere. CSA participation also reduced the reproductive labour of food procurement, such as trying to decide between various qualities (for example, organic carrots from elsewhere versus local conventional carrots). CSA participation has shifted grocery shopping from two to three times a week to just once (M11). CSA is a more “aesthetically pleasing experience” than the grocery store and a “stress-free way of getting my calories” (M11). The reduction in trips to the grocery store is “rewarding for us” (M11). Grocery shopping is “quicker and easier” with a CSA:

if I need fewer vegetables then it just means that I can go quickly through the produce section of the grocery store and have to make fewer choices, pick fewer vegetables, bag fewer vegetables . . . [and] less decision making when picking up the vegetables (M10).

We see from this member (M10) that decision making has been reduced by CSA participation, thus there is a reduction in or absence of decision-making practices. However, even with a meat and a vegetable box, having to shop for additional ingredients is still necessary (M16). CSA participation has streamlined grocery shopping:

So, there's a, there is a convenience element to it. It's delivered to you. You don't put time and effort into the choosing of things, what to grow or standing in the aisles of the grocery store, trying to decide . . . it's also efficient from a time point of view and

sort of personal effort . . . I'm not wasting time, you know deciding which apples I want to get from Costa Rica. Because I don't want apples from Costa Rica you know. I want them from the orchard a mile away (M3).

Participation in CSA removes needing to choose between organic and not organic:

if I'm at the grocery store, I don't often like look at each, every individual purchase item and consider whether I could be buying organic or not. So, it's a way for me to just, sort of, get all the, like I don't have to think about collecting organic versus non-organic if it just all comes to me organic (M5).

Reduced trips to the grocery store, reduced decisions while there, and reduced purchases are all seen as a bonus of CSA participation. Being able to go “two to three weeks without doing any grocery shopping” is “really super” (M12).

However, there was a trade off with food preparation. Preparing the vegetables for storage is a time-consuming task that takes practice and knowledge to do (M15). The reduction in labour and decision-making practices for food procurement was countered by an increase in food preparation practices:

you get stuff from the grocery store, or whatever, and it tends to be pretty clean and pretty washed. And this had obviously just come out on the ground that day or the day before so. There's a lot more sort of work involved. But, yeah. That, I mean I don't think that any of that really dissuaded me from participating (M16).

Food preparation involves cleaning the vegetables and preparing them for storage:

I spent almost every Friday evening washing the materials so I could put into the fridge . . . That was fun for the first year or so. But I did find that daunting because while everybody else in the house was relaxing and enjoying themselves, I was at the sinks washing vegetables for, where it took a couple of hours to get through them (M21).

Getting the box to last the full week or two weeks between boxes mean that members must be attentive to storage with a CSA compared to grocery shopping because “now, you might get something... on a Tuesday, and not eat it until, you know, the following Sunday, for example” (M11). Some of this additional work is contextualized by members as a choice:



It's not less work. But it's not, yeah. I guess it's. It might be more work in some ways. But it's not, because it's a conscious decision and it's one that kind of bring us pleasure. Like it's a choice. So that we feel, it doesn't necessarily feel like more work either (M23).

Meal planning is another reproductive labour practice that we see members performing. Meal planning is “almost imperative” to prevent food waste (M11). For meat-share members, meal preparation requires a little more planning compared to grocery shopping when the meat is in your freezer and needs to be defrosted in advance (M16). Members noted that the increase in time required for planning or preparing meant being selective about when they did this work. Sometimes, this work must be distributed over the days of the week to fit it in. While from Monday to Friday there is less time for meal preparation and complicated recipes, weekends allow for more elaborate culinary activities (M15). These changes did not indicate a change in cooking style, for example a change from utilizing prepared food to cooking with raw ingredients, for most members. Switching to the CSA coincided with a switch to cooking from scratch for one couple (M18). For others, CSA did not change their cooking style (M13, M20).

Food procurement practices were reduced or altered by CSA participation. However, food planning practices and preparation practices increased with CSA participation. CSA impacted the reproductive labour of members by reducing procurement work, increasing planning work, increasing preparation or cleaning work, but seemed to not change cooking style of participants.

*Contextualized Cooking*

Cooking is one of the food practices that gets celebrated on social media compared with other food preparation practices; I found no member posting about the washing of the vegetables on social media, for example, despite it being noted in interviews (M16, M20). I did observe posts about farms washing vegetables before boxing but nothing by members. However, cooking features heavily in social media posts. For interviewees, it is notable who is doing the cooking. Of the interviewed members, seven lived alone or with a roommate and cooked for themselves. Of the twenty-nine interviewees in Male-Female couples: six shared cooking duties equally with their partner; in eight couples, the female member was the main cook; and in five couples, the male member was the main cook (see Appendices D & E).

In describing their cooking practices, many of the members describe a playfulness around cooking, a sense of experimentation. Members provide context for the playful experimentation and pleasure derived from these cooking practices with support for the practices of the farmers. The images of vegetables and the description of the practices are embedded in a meta commentary about engaging in these practices. The explanation – or meta commentary - is also a practice participants engage in. They are telling us how to feel about their practices, of which metacommentary is a practice as well.

Today'sinsanity links eating seasonally and weight loss through their use of hashtags – to contextualize the food they have cooked:

red cabbage (from our csa) with apples, bread dumplings  
and @maggikochstudio gravy.  
#RedCabbage #cabbage #BreadDumplings #gravy #dumplings  
#DumplingsAndGravy #VeganFood #vegan #seasonal #SeasonalVegetables  
#SeasonalFood #OrganicFood #OrganicVeggies #organic  
#CommunitySupportedAgriculture #csa #CSAveggies #foodstagram

#VeganWeightloss #WeightlossFood #weightloss #CountingCalories #VeganGravy #VeganDumplings #yummy (Lorena, n.d.).[ID: Picture of dumpling and cabbage in gravy on a plate].

Racheleatsmeatandlifts talks about eating raw meat – distinct from the cooking practices in other posts – and contextualizes it by talking about how everything is local, and her food footprint is small:

I realized that everything on my plate was sourced in my own city! How cool is that?! @arc\_acres thank you for providing me with the grassfed beef liver, ground beef, and fat trimmings (all of which were eaten raw) The eggs were literally bought from a farm 10 mins away. Of course everything was seasoned with Real Salt. I love knowing that my food didn't have to come from across oceans and mountains to get to me. My food footprint is small. My healthcare impact is small. My waste impact is small (Rachel Maria, n.d.). [ID: A plate with liver, beef, trimmings, and two over easy eggs].

Watersanne, in describing the alfresco dining, mentions that her CSA posts are not sponsored, rather her posts share that she is living the dream:

Week 11!!! I can't believe it's Week 11. Our basket came last Thursday and we've been going at it like rabid dogs. Mostly because we're entertaining like it's 1956. (Not sure what that means. Suffice it to say it's al fresco all the way and no ballgowns and suits.) Here's to the good times of summer! . . . Somebody asked if all my CSA related posts were sponsored. Nope. I don't do sponsored posts. Veggies are all bought and paid for. Just living the dream. My posts are all me and a small glimpse into my life. The food side. (It's more fun and less crazy.) (Anne, n.d.). [ID: Collage of vegetable pictures].

Keliannartist talks about the practice of storing vegetables and being able to cook last year's turnip (Rutabega on the mainland, poster is in NL) in May:

An ode to my very last stored turnip from Roots Farm NL...from last September! It's amazing how long these gorgeous veggies can last when stored properly. Can't wait for this year's CSA program to start again 🍷 (Keli-Ann Pye-Beshara, n.d.) [ID: Posted May 9, picture of a peeled turnip, rutabaga on the mainland, with it shredded, and cubed in different pictures].

Hoffmanfarmplates talks about experimenting with beurre blanc and the comfort in preparing the same ingredients several ways:

Bok choy and lemon two ways . . . I have been into echoing menus lately. There is something comforting about eating your ingredients prepared several ways in the same meal and it really #TiesTheRoomTogether .... #fusion #FusionCooking (Hoffman Family, n.d.). [ID: Three pictures of the finished dishes].

Despite the enjoyment derived from cooking by some members, not everyone shared their enthusiasm for frequent cooking but were motivated to do so by guilt:

if you have all these veggies in your fridge, then you will feel guilty if you don't use them. So, you're way less likely to, like, order in. Because you've got food that you have to use up that's already in the house. So, that's a big shift with cooking and eating. Like, if you come home and you're... too—you know, too tired to cook anything, but you have this fridge full of veggies., then you will just, like, throw something together (M24).

Other members described their motivation to ensure all the food gets consumed as an obligation to not let their community members down:

you don't want to waste all this stuff that... you know, a) you paid money to purchase up front, and b) you know, that—the people that grow these vegetables have, you know, taken on the risk of, you know, farming. And they're working hard to produce the stuff. So, you—you almost feel like you don't want to—you know, you don't want to let your—it does, I guess, feel like more of a community in that sense. Like you—like, you don't want to let your... community members down by throwing out the food that they have grown (M11).

For members doing a meat share, their style of cooking had to adjust to accommodate their share. One member discusses having fewer wing nights with their chicken share:

I try not to buy meat from grocery store . . . when we had those 12 chickens like I cut them up and we did, like chicken wings that time. So, I was like "Oh! There's enough wings to have chicken wings" But otherwise . . . I cook much more bone-in meat and I'll do way more, like we're going to cook you know, make bone broth and use every bit of this bird (M23).

The labour-intensiveness of cooking competes with reproductive labour such as childcare; parents tag-team to accomplish both but not always without challenges: "If we have to prepare the food, one of us in the house is with children, one of us is on the food. And we would alternate and just, by the end of Summer, it actually got to be too much, too challenging" (M15).

Some members reflected that the increase in reproductive labour, despite being an active choice, still increased their workload. There is awareness that food procurement and preparation choices create increased reproductive labour. For example, making yogurt requires work that does not take a lot of time, but more time than going to the grocery store and getting yogurt:

So, for example, we mentioned like making yogurt. Well, that doesn't take a lot of time, but it takes time. Like you actually have to do it and then it's way the heck easier to go to the grocery and pick-up a thing of yogurt, like way easier (M23).

Cooking is an element of reproductive labour that is more visible on social media and is celebrated in that medium. There is playfulness and creativity alongside the work and drudgery. There is also a lot of adaptation as members adjust to getting their food in a way that is different from a grocery store – fewer wing nights and more ingredient-led recipes. From the celebration of root crops storability to the joy of alfresco dining, there is joy amongst the dirty dishes (which rarely get seen on social media).

It's not just members that engage in cooking; farmers do, too! Farmers also provide meta commentary for their cooking posts. Funnyduckfarmdelivery delves into prescriptive language around food when they describe how to make bone broth but also why you should make and consume bone broth – for both health and zero waste reasons (Funny Duck Farms, n.d.). Footprintfarm explains why they have not tried a “Beyond Burger” while getting a snout kiss from a pig:

I feel pretty strongly about eating food made with ingredients I can pronounce, that doesn't come in a bag, and hopefully I'm lucky enough to personally know the folks who grow those ingredients. I think people should feel good about the food they eat and I hope that they use their food dollars to support as much of that feel-good food as possible (Taylor & Jake Mendell, n.d.).

Arc\_acres celebrates leaf lard:

The butter on my bread and the fat in my frying pan. They told us fat was bad for us....but is it really? Is it there for a reason? 🧑🏻 History tells us yes. It's a natural

preservative. It there to keep us warm, protect our bodies and build our brains. It also sustains me between meals. Without enough fat in my diet, I find myself slow and slumpy as I work through my day. I also find the higher fat content I consume, the less sugar I crave.....and I LOVE my sugar!!What's your thoughts? (Regenerative Agriculture & Permaculture Farm, n.d.)

In the posts by Footprintfarm and Arc\_Acres, we see farmers celebrating eating the food they produce. However, farmers also mentioned not being able to enjoy what they produce due to the time constraints of producing it. Below, we see lightly\_farmed explain the challenge of eating what you grow:

Sound on for that sizzling 🍷. As wild as it sounds, I didn't really eat much of what I grew until recently. By the time I got out of work, then went to the plot, then drove home and unloaded all the produce I had no desire to cook so I ate out almost every day. This year I've been moved to cook more because of my CSA subscribers and volunteers - shout out to all you lovely folks!! Here's something I cooked recently that I was super proud of featuring huitlacoche found while I was harvesting corn at Gary Comer Youth Center, poblanos and onions from my plot, and locally sourced garlic from Farm on Ogden. Check on your farmer friends and make sure we're eating well 😊😊 #CommunitySupportedAgriculture #POCfarmers #FarmersOfColor #UrbanAgriculture #huitlacoche [ID: Video of food cooking].

This also came up in interviews with farmers talking about trying to keep all the balls in the air.

When juggling many balls, cooking for yourself gets dropped:

It's really funny. Because we're talking about that today, actually. That, you know, you grow all this wonderful produce, and you raised your own animals, and it's really clean and healthy, and you don't have time to cook. You're picking up pizza, like, every night ... McDonalds, or Subway or something, just to feed the kids by eight o'clock so they can get to bed, you know... (F8).

At the other end of the spectrum are those that cook for themselves in the future by canning:

Yesterday was the day we pretended to be Italian 11 (except Aunt Margaret, who didn't have to pretend) and spent the day turning 9 bushels of tomatoes into 142 jars of sauce. .Canning is a funny thing. Is it worth it, in a strictly economical sense, to spend 14 hours of your time turning your grown or purchased products into pickles or jam or salsa? Maybe not. But those of us who do it know that the value of our shelves of mason jars (proudly - and somewhat smugly - displayed in a china cabinet in our dining room in my case) transcends their dollar value. .For me, canning is about the connection. It's usually a family affair, a chance to work together towards our common goal. It's about connection to the women who came before me, the ones I know and

loved, who shared their invaluable knowledge, as well as the ancestors who relied on the “putting down” of food to feed their families throughout a long, cold winter. .And it’s about gratitude: for being able to reap what we sow; for being able to be just a bit more self-sufficient; and -most importantly- for the fact that, in this time and this part of the world, food is easier, safer, more affordable, and more readily available than it has ever been than at any point throughout human history. I can, to remind myself how lucky I am that it is not strictly necessary . . . (Heidi, n.d.). [ID: Multiple shots of a home canning session: tomatoes spread out, 5-gallon buckets, people stirring, and tables with finished 1L mason jars of sauce].

Farmers sometimes celebrate their own produce by cooking it and engaging in promotion and contextualization. However, we also see that often farmers are too busy to cook for themselves.

Reproductive labour competes with their farm labour.

## Health Practices

Health came up in almost all interviews except for three farmers and one member. Three of the farmers noted a reluctance to speak to health benefits due to their professional designation (F10, F7, and F3), however two of these farmers shared anecdotal experiences of health benefits (F7, F3). The remaining five farmers explained health benefits for themselves and their members relating to the consumption of the food produced: “what gets packed in the boxes comes into the house . . . definitely expanded what vegetables we have access to, and... yeah. So, I would say definitely increasing—like, better eating habits” (F8). Increased vegetable consumption is seen as beneficial for farmers and members (F9). Another farmer shared her experience and those of her members:

our own health improved when I started growing our own food and I see that people are looking—the people that I deliver to are looking for the same thing in life. Good, healthy eating keep themselves fit into later years and not rely on the medical system . . . There are people who signed up with me to become healthy. And they only eat what I bring them. And the more I bring them, the happier they are. They hug me when I arrive (F4).

One farmer noted that the way people engage with their food has an impact on their mental health:

people falling in love with new vegetables that they've never tried before. And then, even to the point where they get really excited about the arrival of that vegetable in the spring, I think is overall just very healthy attitude. Something really nice to have in life. Just, you know, that excitement, anticipation, and the joy that you get out of, like, just—either just eating the vegetables, or also being in the kitchen and preparing the food (F6).

Another farmer echoed the link between food and mental health: “To me it's a solution to global problems, climate problems. You know society and that the food problem and social, mental health; good food seems to be the answer to everything and good agricultural practices” (F1). For members, some linked human health and ecosystem health, or human health and pollinator



health (M3, M9, M14). Members noted the health benefits of the superior nutritional value of the foods grown organically and transported over short distances (M1, M2, M7, M10, M13, M17, M19, M20, M21, M22, M23, M25, M26), increased vegetable consumption (M5, M6, M8, M11, M12, M13, M15, M17, M19, M22, M24), and increased exercise due to share pick-up transportation (M4, M5, M13, M24). The importance of health to farmers and members is evident in practices they explain as being related to health.

Members and farmers alike engaged in practices that they described as being related to their health. Some CSA members associated health with certain practices. For example, what does my work lunch look like? Amazing lunches “full of a whole bunch of whole foods” are indicative of healthy consumption of food (M15). Health practices included setting quantifiable goals such as trying to eat vegetables with every meal which are easier to meet during CSA season and “I don’t have to think about it” (M5). Another quantifiable goal: “Half your plate should be vegetables” (M8). For others, clean plates are a metric. As a family, “everybody seems to kind of want to gather around and see what we got this week” and for the person doing the food procurement and cooking, they keep an eye on health by observing whether it got eaten (M17). These eating practices are seen as indicators of health. The vegetable share is understood as a way of regulating healthy eating - either by getting enough vegetables by finishing the share, or by reducing consumption in other areas, or ensuring diversity of consumed vegetables. As observed by these farmers:

Most of our new CSA members sign up because of a life change. More and more that life change is a scary health diagnosis. We have a number of CSA members with heart conditions, autoimmune diseases, and a few who are fighting the long and valiant cancer battle. My heart goes out to each of them, and I'm thrilled that our doctors are suggesting local veg as a way to help support patients' recoveries. I love seeing these folks change over the season, often going from apprehensive and doubtful, to cautiously optimistic and trying new veg, and finally to believing in the power of cabbage (true story). I'm not sure the FDA will ever claim that food is medicine, but

I'd say I have at least a few CSA members who might. #FoodAsMedicine #HealthyEating (Taylor & Jake Mendell, n.d.). [ID: Picture of a farmer holding leafy greens in a greenhouse].

While many of the farmers commented on feedback from customers indicating health benefits, there was a reluctance to speak to that: "I'm not a physician, I'm not a scientist, I'm a farmer. So, I never really, I'm very reluctant to ever talk about the health attributes of anything that we grow" (F3). The reluctance to talk about health is explained in terms of expertise, as a "non-scientific" person (F10). While customers seek the CSA out with the intent of becoming healthier and then tell the farmer how they are feeling in terms of their health (F4), there is a reluctance to make claims about health impacts. Despite the reluctance to make claims, there is an abundance of anecdotes from members and farmers that explain these eating practices as being health related:

I had a lady, I had a lady come to me. She's a friend, actually, she works for me. And she was diagnosed with some sort of problem, health problem. And she said, I'm going to switch, I'm going to start buying your basket. And, you know, I don't think she has ever eaten anywhere but, you know, the [grocery store]-type industrial food outlet before, never shopped in markets. She has now been with us for about six months, and she says her life has changed. You know, I'm not gonna say we cured her illness. You know, that's not my forte. But I can say that she's loving what we're giving, and loving the flavors and tastes and just the whole experience. So people want good food. It's as easy as that (F3).

These eating practices (eating all the vegetables from a basket or having half of each plate be vegetables from the basket) are understood by members to be practices relating to their health.

**Complementary Sustainability Practices**

Both farmers and members were asked in interviews if there were any other practices that they felt were related such as sustainable fashion, shopping second hand, making your own clothes, or zero waste and reducing plastics. I have called these practices complementary sustainability practices as they occur alongside CSA. Twenty-two of the members engage in complementary sustainability practices (M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M17, M18, M19, M20, M22, M23, M24, M25, M26), however many noted these practices were not caused by CSA participation (M5, M6, M8, M9, M11, M25, M26). For some, these practices predated CSA participation (M4, M13, M19, M20). Some explained these practices as rooted in an awareness of the environment, climate change, sustainability, or their carbon footprint (M1, M3, M7, M17, M18, M22, M23). Seven of the farmers engage in complementary sustainability practices (F3, F4, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10) and one farmer is considering a switch to reduced plastics (F5). However, farmers had diverse understandings of the role these practices play. One found zero waste challenging (F3) while another had no issues avoiding single use plastics (F4). Two farmers noted the merging of professional and personal lifestyles contributed to engaging in these practices (F9, F10). Another farmer explained these practices in terms of wanting to be “producers rather than consumers” (F7). One farmer, despite engaging in many of these practices, noted the relative impact of individualized practices versus collective political practices (F6).

There is a range of practices and various levels of involvement. On one end of the spectrum, members describe themselves as attentive. For example, members described themselves as attentive to zero waste: “I’m strongly paying attention to zero waste . . . I try not to take bags, try not to take receipts” (M1). This attentiveness is seen relating to other areas, such as

clothing: “my awareness around, how clothes are produced and how detrimental that is, in terms of the lack of controls in some of the places they're produced, has really made me stop and think when I—when I go and start looking at clothes” (M17).

Beyond attentiveness, some members used more declarative language to describe these practices, such as “lifestyle goals”:

So we have lifestyle goals in terms of eating as locally as possible, eating with the season. In general, we try not to use our car anymore than we absolutely need to, or that we can't easily ride our bikes or walk. So the CSA was a natural step to wanting to support local growers and get local food. So I'm not sure that the CSA was actually the impetus that changed our lifestyle, it just fit really well with some of our lifestyle priorities (M24, M25).

The sense that members had “lifestyle priorities” in which both CSA and these other practices fit, was expressed by many participants. There is a sense of an underlying philosophy that motivates a diverse cluster of practices:

We definitely are... and have over a period of years tried to definitely reduce waste by recycling and re-using, reducing our consumption. We try to reduce our energy consumption in general by reducing heating and lighting and other electronics et cetera. We have installed solar panels on our house, and we have owned—I owned an electric motorcycle previously and we've owned two electric cars. We own one currently. But I'd say generally, yes, sustainability is... a motivating factor for both of us, I'd say (M10).

This diverse cluster of practices is inclusive of transportation, as seen with the electric vehicle use above. Avoiding car use by biking or using transit is a different example expressed by another participant:

I don't own a car, so I ride my bike pretty much everywhere, and then I take transit in the winter. I [laughs] tend to shop exclusively at secondhand stores or thrift stores. And I... Yeah, I try to reduce my footprint as much as possible; recycle obviously. I'm a part of Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-op . . . I guess I've always kind of been that way . . . it was an easy decision to join [Name of Farm CSA] for, you know—that it's co-op, but also, yeah, they're doing really cool things (M13).

Transportation practices are important enough to influence where one lives. While transportation is bundled with multiple practices, transportation remains a “really big thing”:

I try to do a lot of those things. Try to avoid single-use plastic wherever possible. Carry around a metal straw with me. Try to avoid shopping altogether. Definitely shop at secondhand stores. Like, all of the above, definitely. I mean, not having a car is a really big thing for me. I don't want to have a car . . . I, like, chose my neighbourhood that I live in to be close to work. And to be close to—like, amenities that I'd be using. Because I really didn't want to buy a car. I wanted to be able to bike and walk (M24).

Transportation practices are supported by an underlying philosophy that in “almost every aspect of our life, we try to figure out something we can do [to help the environment]”:

Well, I think as a young person, I was very cognisant about vehicles . . . Especially living at Victoria. There was a lot more, I found, environmental awareness. So, that year that we spent out West, on the island, opened our eyes to things. Prior to that, we'd already switched from plastic bags . . . we just don't buy stuff based on like, you know, packaging . . . whatever we buy, we try to use it as long as we possibly can without having to buy more stuff . . . But I do think that we've also just . . . figured it out over time and thought about it and stuff. How can we as a family—you know, especially given that we do have three kids. Like, how do we, you know, try to help them be stewards of the environment, but also minimize when we're here, what we're consuming . . . if we don't do it, then—then we're not modeling it. And they're not going to do it either . . . we don't take airplanes for any kind of vacations, or anything like that . . . I would say almost every aspect of our life, we try to figure out something we can do . . . I think that we're trying to do the best we can, in a lot of different ways . . . we're always open to new ideas too. So, like, if we see something happening somewhere else, or our friends doing something, we kind of think, ‘Oh! You know, maybe we could try that?’ (M20).

We see here an iterative layering of exploration, practices, problem solving, and knowledge.

Over time, sustainability practices evolve and change for many of the members. Change was

emphasized greatly by members, as we will see in the chapter on Evaluation Practices and

Material Changes. There is an acknowledgement of the perceived gaps in practices and how to

close those gaps:

From an environmental perspective but also from a cost savings perspective, that we don't want to work forever . . . He's [husband] kind of been doing an energy audit of our house and we're trying to reduce energies and we have the conversations about plastics a lot. Because it's difficult to go to the grocery store not bring back plastics.

So, we started, like we started making yogurt . . . that's one thing we can do then we don't buy plastic yogurt containers . . . We have those conversations . . . This is the car use and kind of where, where we still doing this and where can we cut back on this. So, yeah. Absolutely, all of those things kind of tie in (M23).

Some members describe abstaining from certain practices as “minimalist”:

So, in general, I'd say I'm quite a, I got to know the right word, minimalistic or self, trying to be self-sustainable and plastic-free. I've been kind of natural from my background on my work and the CSA was kind of a natural addition . . . Shopping at [name of a zero-waste grocery store] and another alternatives like that, in doing community item shares in my neighborhood there's a few . . . I make my own lotions and deodorants and that kind of stuff . . . But my food was kind of the, one of the main things left that I was a little uneasy about that I wasn't zoning in to try to do a little bit better (M4).

Shopping secondhand is a strategy we see for reducing consumption: “Secondhand anything . . .

If the ethical option that I want is not available, I'll live without it” (M3). We see above that

members abstain from purchasing yogurt at the store or abstain from purchasing altogether. This

abstinence from consumption practices is seen alongside opting into other practices such as

making your own personal care products and seeking out community shares. How do we account

for this cluster of practices? One member explains their evolution, starting with a level of

“awareness” which precedes any kind of significant change in practices, to “finding a footing” in

a particular mindset:

Definitely when you become aware of one thing, it's hard not to become aware of other thing. And once you're aware of them, then it's hard to not change some of the things you do. I don't mean to turn the answer around into a generalization that for us, I think that's part of what has happened. So, things that I could point to? I think becoming, I don't know that I would point towards our experience with CSA directly. A catalyst. But I think that the conversations around CSA and the mindset around it has made it such that we have considered other things in our lives as being increasingly important. For example, we drive an electric car, and we have, I guess got it four years ago or something like this four or five years ago. Is it because we have a CSA, no. But I would say that finding a footing in the mindset that supports what our reasoning behind CSA or behind our supporting agriculture in that way. You know, knowing that that has found a purchase in our lives, encourages us to push ourselves in other areas, for sure. So the electric car, we you know probably bike more, my husband is a crazy avid bike year round cyclist. He bikes to work year-round. You know all that kind of stuff?

That was not the case so much before a CSA. But I don't know that it's because of CSA. I think it's just all part of the package (M6).

As observed by one member: “it's a challenge to bring actions and values together sometimes” (M4) but members outlined several practices that reflected their values. Reduced transportation (M10, M13, M14, M23, M24, M5), zero waste and the reduction of plastic use (M12, M19), reducing water consumption by following a plant-based diet (M15), are some of the complementary sustainability practices that members do alongside CSA specific practices. Reduction or avoidance of certain practices is a key theme here. Reducing waste, reducing consumption by purchasing less, less frequently, or secondhand, and reducing gasoline-powered transportation by choosing a different home or changing the mode of transportation. While members were explicit that these complementary sustainability practices were not caused by CSA, they also noted that they are related insofar as they are undergirded by similar values.

## **Farming Practices**

Members and farmers interviewed participate in organic, beyond organic, or regenerative CSA, which suggests a preference for a particular range of farming practices. Social media posts were a rich source of information on farming practices with one hundred and forty-nine posts detailing what farmers do. Twenty of the twenty-six members noted farming practices in interviews (M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M13, M14, M15, M16, M17, M19, M20, M22, M23, M24, M25, M26). I expand on the practices described by farmers and members in three sections: Environmental Practices, Growing the Vegetables and Raising the Meat, Planning and Bookkeeping.

### *Environmental Practices*

Farmers do many practices on the farm that they explain as being related to the protection of the environment. Members are attentive to these practices. What are these environmentally friendly practices?

Plastic reduction or zero waste features heavily. Johnsonfamilyorchards is ditching plastic and posts about the last of their plastic berry containers: “Definitely a milestone for us! I’m hoping to source the next order using biodegradable plastics” (Johnson Family Orchards, n.d.). Goodharvestorganicfarm is also getting rid of plastic tomato punnets (Good Harvest Organic Farm, n.d.). Catenafarm explains their plastic-free practices and encourages people to “stop on by and we can discuss how to rid the world of plastic, one bag at a time” (Catena Farm, n.d.). For a cidery, this means flutes: “We like to serve our samples in glass champagne flutes. We know our #cider tastes better out of glass, PLUS we don't throw away sampler cups” (Farmgate Cider, n.d.). Some farms struggled with zero waste:

You know, people objected to the money, didn’t return the packaging, cleaning the packaging became a nightmare, some of it came back pretty disgusting. So, you know



we try to be zero waste. We've been working on that for 20 years. Very, very difficult with transporting fresh produce (F3).

These challenges with zero waste are not universal, with one farmer observing that they have had no issues with members washing and returning glass bowls with lids (F4). While the farmer quoted above (F3) struggled with zero waste, they are attentive to food waste:

And what we don't sell, we freeze, and what is considered a second, goes to the kitchen and we make sauces, so you know, not only the quality controls, but also knowing sort of what is going to sell at a market. And what is going to bring, bring people back. You know, the kitchen, we used to have like a mountain of compost every year just from rejects and it was such a waste of food. And that's why we moved to the frozen vegetables and prepared foods (F3).

Soil and water health also featured in social media posts. Farmers are also attentive to the impact of their farming practices on soil health and water quality. Angelicaorganicfarm illustrates the cultivation of soil health through the addition of microbes and explains why this is important (Local Organic Veggie Boxes, n.d.). Floatinglotusfarmstead shares what happens when it rains in a demonstration by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation: five different surfaces "concrete pad, typical corn/soybean field, planted cover crop, permeable rock surface(driveway), perennial pasture" (n.d.):

Jars underneath in front are runoff collection and the jars in the back row collect water that actually absorbed into the soil/surface! The back left two jars are completely empty as the right three are full! The front left two jars are overflowing and the one from mono crops is super dirty/silty. The front right three have a little water in them but is admissible with the rain simulator and about 5-7% grade (Floating Lotus Farmstead, n.d.).

Neither the concrete pad nor the corn/soybean absorbed water well, and the corn/soybean did not filter the water. Cattle also impact soil health. Arc\_acres explains the environmental benefits of grass-fed beef:

Built from green grass grown by the sun. Can't get more earth friendly than that. No bare soil. No erosion control. No dirty or chemical heavy water run off. No annual grain cropping [sic] on our deep and beautifully rich Ottawa Valley soils. Minimal


fossil fuel usage to make their winter dry forage food. Leaving “behind” some quadruple fermented poop piles for the next generation of growth. Speeding up soil building 100x’s fast than without them grazing over the grasslands. A great reason for me to wake early everyday to shepherd these bovines over the land. Feed my community and make this planet a healthier space. I couldn’t imagine doing anything else (Regenerative Agriculture & Permaculture Farm, n.d.). [ID: Three cows grazing].

The shepherding of cattle across the land is explained as key to how these operations impact the environment. Another beef operation, Grazingdays, explains their rotational grazing strategy:

“We’re starting a new monitoring program on the farm this year to allow us to time our grazing rotations perfectly to maximize the amount of grass we can grow and the amount of carbon we sequester” (Grazingdays, n.d.). The rehabilitation of landscapes is a theme that we see often in posts and interviews about grazing cattle. From Breadandbutterfarm:

These beasts are magical animals and the work they do on the land is impressive. Adding fertility and building top soil [sic], sequestering carbon (yes! When given the right conditions s to live these animals actually remove carbon from the atmosphere! Despite what you always here [sic]- those are the grain fed, confined brethren who live miserable lives). They are magical because as they do all this amazing work to rehabilitate landscapes, they also grow and raise young that over years will then provide us with nourishment that is healthy and delicious (again let’s compare the nutritional quality of the CAFO animals to the grass fed/finished beasts and we find a totally different nutritional profile - more lesser known facts!!!)” (Bread and Butter Farm, n.d.) [ID: Picture of cows bale grazing].

Rehabilitation of the soil is a theme for more than just beef farmers. Farms took the Climate Action Pledge through the National Farmers Union – Ontario:

Way to take the #ClimateAction pledge, @beetbox\_coop! Your actions of 1) perennial cover crop planting, 2) compost management, 3) customer education are all helping to mitigate climate change on your farm and inspire others to follow suit. You can be just like Beetbox and take the pledge too! Check out our website for more details including our webinar about climate change impacts on farmers and why so many farmers are on board with the #ClimateActionPledge: see link in our bio! #OurPledgeOurPlanet  (National Farmers Union – Ontario, n.d.). [ID: Picture of 2M, 1F farmers with beets and the NFU logos and “We made the pledge” text].

The National Farmers Union – Ontario reposted Sleepy G Farm’s climate action pledge to keep their “soil covered with living plants” such as oats and clover, which will result in “increasing

biodiversity and fertility, reducing erosion, and sequestering carbon” (National Farmers Union – Ontario, n.d. reposts Sleepy G Farm, n.d.). Fatchancefarmstead advocated about having participated in an efao2 (Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario) and nfuontario (National Farmers Union Ontario) local 613 funded Soil Health Benchmark Study to measure and track carbon levels:

We are part of a group of farms across Ontario testing soil on different parts of our farm to measure soil health and to track carbon levels over the next several years. Scroll through the pictures to see the step by step process in taking soil samples to be sent to a lab for analysis. Big thanks to the @efao2 and the @nfuontario Local 316 for helping fund and facilitate this project. We are in a unique position regarding the climate emergency as stewards of the land to try and help lower CO2 levels.#TakeAFatChance #organic #ClimateChange (Fat Chance Farmstead, n.d.).[ID: Picture of a form for “Soil Health Benchmark Study” with a shipping box, and multiple shots of soil samples being taken and finally shown in plastic bags, labeled and ready to ship].

This farmer explains that environmental practices on the farm are not distinct from their personal practices:

But I think being organic farmers, we were doing it because we all individually, personally are feel very dedicated to trying to have a positive impact on our environment and world and so I think a lot of those things, you will see in our personal lives . . . It's kind of a funny lifestyle in that the professional and the private are very being melded together . . . I think the decisions that we make as organic farmers are also sort of, bleed into our personal lives (F9).

Members are also attentive to these environmentally friendly farming practices. Farming practices that are environmentally friendly also featured heavily in member understandings of how to reach their environmental goals. Members seek out farms where farming practices are “a bit more cognizant of what nature needs rather than burning at a field, growing and then using it too much and then shifting” (M15). This includes farming practices that are closer to carbon neutral without “wild and crazy chemicals” (M17) such as cancer-causing chemicals (M19). These farming practices are seen as more “natural” (M19). Reduced reliance on big green houses

which require a lot of energy to run is understood to reduce environmental footprint (M8). An important dimension of environmental stewardship is being able to observe and know what farming practices were happening and knowing that they are chemical-free (M20). Members explain that chemicals can be avoided by growing organically with certification (M13), growing organically without certification (M14), or by growing organic with or without certification (M3, M5). These environmentally friendly farming practices take care of the animals and the land “in a way that is sustainable” (M16) and that builds soil (M23). These farming practices are contrasted with the practices of the “corporate industrial food systems” (M24) that are understood to be environmentally harmful. The “way we do . . . conventional agriculture” is understood to be bad for our environment (M9). Members understood these farming practices to have impacts across a broad range of environmental metrics:

Then there's the climate footprint aspect which is also important to me . . . In terms of, my understanding is that organic farming is also good for biodiversity and habitat and so forth because you have less mono-culture and less sort of clearing of land especially if they have permaculture principles which I know [Farmer's Name] does for example. So, it's better for biodiversity issue, which is awesome and water also, conservation, and soil health (M2).

One member explains how they evaluate farming practices or farm characteristics under the goal of environmental stewardship: local is better than organic, local and organic is better, mixed crops and crop rotation is key, and the avoidance of pesticides is essential for “ecological health” (M22). Shorter supply chains are understood to not have “those same emissions” or “environmental consequences” as industrial farms; farms that are “organic and not using the same hybrid or genetic varieties of the food” are preferable and understood to be a “bit more aware of climate resiliency . . . [and] not negatively impacting surrounding environment” (M4).

Supporting farms with environmentally friendly practices is seen as supporting the existence of this type of farming, among members. Supporting local farms is seen as a protective measure against “mega-agriculture”:

Well obviously, I'm very much concerned about the environment, and I absolutely detest having to buy a food, that's grown five hundred thousand kilometers away and then shipped in. I am also very much concerned about the soil erosion, the pesticide and insecticide use, so these are the main reasons or the most important reasons for me to support local because if we don't support local, they will disappear and then we are stuck with the mega-agriculture of farms that—they don't produce food there. Yeah, you know what I mean by that. So yeah that's—that is my way of contributing to the environment and to support local (M7).

CSA participation is part of a broader strategy for addressing both environmental concerns and discomfort with consumerism:

It's kind of fits into a big circle of everything. Like the environmental perspective is definitely one piece of many. But I think, to everything just trying to live more simply. Be engaged with my community. Meeting neighbors that would be in a similar region. I think they're all kind of one piece of the same puzzle . . .Scaling down. Being okay with the options that are in season. And I think, in our kind of consumerist and product-driven and waste-driven kind of system that we operate in, it's easy that you have everything at your fingertips. All the choices in the world and you can have anything that you want at any time. And I guess I was starting to get a little uncomfortable with that and this is just a great option for channeling out some of that noise if that makes sense (M4).

CSA participation is seen as a multipronged approach that accomplishes “doing a good thing for ourselves and for the farmers and for the earth” (M6).

*Growing the Vegetables and Raising the Meat*

Farmers also engage in farming practices that are not as explicitly environmentally friendly. Plant breeding is a practice we see farmers engage with over a longer time frame. For example, Fermetournesol shares the results of a ten-year project of crossing beets (Tourne-Sol co-operative farm, n.d.). Csggenesisfarm illustrates winnowing as a part of seed saving for “culturally relevant seed” (The CSG at Genesis Farm, n.d.). Beetbox\_coop highlights the results of 2019 weseedchange.org potato breeding experiment (Ferme BeetBox Farm #OttCity, n.d.).

Here is another lettuce variety trial by beetbox\_coop:

The BeetBox crew welcomed farmers and aspiring farmers onto the farm for a tour with the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario @efao2 yesterday. We munched on different lettuces from the variety trial and we dug up potatoes from our the breeding project (Ferme BeetBox Farm #OttCity, n.d.). [ID: Four pictures of farmers presenting in the field, at a table, in front of a bar, and inside to a group of onlookers].

Fermelevetot shows us the delicate work of grafting tomato plants:

Grafting tomatoes (attaching the top of a delicious and productive variety to a disease-resistant rootstock) improves yields and extends the life of the tomato plant. It also involves slicing up all your expensive specialty tomato seedlings with a razor... not for the faint of heart! (Ferme Léve-tôt, n.d.). [ID: Four pictures of grafting tomatoes].

Growing the vegetables and raising the animals is more than just breeding plants. Ensuring plants survive the shoulder season or overwintering is a practice necessary on many farms.

Healthy\_harvest\_farm and footprintfarm both talk about tucking in plants in low temperatures (Healthy Harvest Farm CSA, n.d. and Taylor & Jake Mendell, n.d.). Footprintfarm expands on care for plants in low temperatures with another post about using tech to monitor tunnel temperatures (Taylor & Jake Mendell, n.d.). Further elaborating on getting plants to survive low temperatures, footprintfarm talks about the delicate balance of winter irrigation (Taylor & Jake Mendell, n.d.). Navigating a wide range of temperatures over the course of the growing season is a farming practice year-round for many farms. Rootsradicalcsa shares pro tips for repairing a

tunnel (Roots Radical CSA, n.d.). Catenafarm gives us a list of some of the bigger tasks in their first season, including tunnel construction: “We took a field and built 100 raised beds, moved 40 tonnes of compost by hand, built a wash station, greenhouse, two 100 foot long tunnels, ran an 18 week CSA, and attended two weekly farmers markets” (Catena Farm, n.d.).

Harvesting animals is a busy time of year for many farms. Funnyduckfarmsdelivery talks about how the last of the harvesting and calving for the year happened on the same day (Funny Duck Farms, n.d.). Getting the animals to processing calmly is a lot of work as stonepostfarms explains:

It’s processing day. I just finished unloading 200 of these guys at the processor. While we were unloading, one of the employees I was helping mentioned, “your chickens are really calm, most birds we unload are flailing around but yours are quiet and easy to unload.” It really hit me, that all the hard work, our animal husbandry practices, and all the love and respect we give these birds, and all our animals, is really paying off and giving these birds the best life we can. I felt so proud that our farming practices gave these birds a happy life and prepared them for their final day, to make it as low stress as possible. Days like today make me proud to be a farmer and to provide the best meat we can to our Amazing customers! (StonepostFarms, n.d.). [ID: A picture of a flock of chickens].

Growing vegetables and raising meat on a limited financial budget requires creativity. Operating a farm in the context of climate change also requires imagination. Ingenuity is a necessary farming practice, whether you are repairing a tractor or creating a mobile shade unit for your sheep. Ironwoodorganics explains learning how to fix a combine to avoid pricey shop rates:

I was taking off the Oderbrucker barley ... when the dew set in, it was just enough extra ‘work’ to nearly set the clutch on fire 🔥. Two parts orders and a steep learning curve and we’re back in service! Shop rates are often \$125 an hr, so for every hour at the dealer, it’s a days work(+), not to mention float and wide load costs. Necessity is the mother of ‘figure it out for yourself’ (Ironwood Organics, n.d.). [ID: Picture of a combine getting repaired].

Ingenuity is not only about fixing farm equipment and infrastructure; ingenuity also includes creating equipment and infrastructure. Joiafoodfarm found success with their second mobile shade unit prototype:

Our mobile shade unit withstood the storm test of 60 mph straight winds and dumping, pounding rain yesterday! This is huge for us! It means our second prototype is a winner! . . . It's easy to move daily, it carries all of their free choice minerals and salts, it even carries water if our above ground water pipe doesn't reach a paddock they are in. AND, the temperature difference under the shade is unbelievable during these hot, hot days. With a slight breeze, they're golden...I couldn't swallow the price tag of the units in the grazing magazines. This one was built for many thousands less and we are so happy it passed its first major test. Our newly planted silvopasture will take years to provide shade, so for now, this is it! (Joia Food Farm, n.d.). [ID: Picture of a mobile shade unit with sheep under the shade].

Ingenuity also involves dusting off old techniques to deal with new climate impacts. Rootsfarmnl talks about food security in the context of intense weather events and that supporting local farmers helps the farmers to expand storage (root cellars) which helps with year-round food supply (Roots, n.d.). We see that ingenuity is a necessary practice for farmers.

Maple Syrup production involves a slightly different farming rhythm as sugaring season is short. Fermeetforet walks us through both the tasks and the tempo of the sugaring season:

Throwback one month (+1 day) ago, our first day of boiling of the year. Today we finish off the last bit of boiling. What a month it's been! The season was fast and furious, with sap flows like we've never seen before. We made a record (for us) amount of syrup. The large amount of snow added to the drama and magic of it all, and all in all we are left feeling grateful, blessed and pretty tired.. And now we have syrup to share, lots of it. What maple product would you like us to produce? (Ferme et Forêt, n.d.). [ID: Maple Syrup boiling].

2019 Syrup Season Staff Photo, from right to left: Maya, bottler extraordinaire. Has filled thousands of bottles all the while entertaining the little one for hours AND somehow surviving the smell of those gloves which has gotten progressively worst as the season went on.. Sean: multi tasker, problem solver, he does it all from tapping, to equipment management, to boiling and everything in between. He also takes the late night shifts and somehow still gets up at 6am to start all over again.. Téo: when home from school, he's been almost full time at the sugar shack. He brings in firewood, cleans the bottling room and digs trenches around the sugar shack for the rivers of melting snow to drain away.. Geneviève: she splits her time between forest work -



fixing lines that the sap runs through to get to the sugar shack, and boiling for hours on end. This task is also called Feeding the beast, which has an endless appetite for firewood. Note the gaping hole in the snow pants which literally melted while feeding the beast (Ferme et Forêt, n.d.). [ID: Picture of three adults, 2 F, 1M, and one child holding maple syrup products in a sugar shack].

There is an intensity to the practices associated with sugaring because the season is brief. We can also see that there are a multitude of tasks required in a short period of time. To grow the vegetables and raise the meat, farmers need to engage in breeding, ingenuity, harvesting, processing, and a myriad of tasks associated with each practice.

### *Planning and Bookkeeping*

Planning and bookkeeping are administrative practices that we see many farmers doing. Sometimes the division of labour on the farm allows some farmers to avoid these tasks and bookkeeping is less frequently posted about than some other farming practices. However, it remains an essential practice in the operation of a farm. Crop and succession planning is highlighted by footprintfarm (Taylor & Jake Mendell, n.d.). Farm\_housefood highlights the planning that is involved in coordinating six farms for a shared box by posting about their meeting (Aliments Farmhouse Food, n.d.). Footprintfarm provides an itemized list of costs and work that go into producing winter greens (Taylor & Jake Mendell, n.d.). Fatchancefarmstead shares their ‘chicken scratches’ (illegible handwriting) on the organic certification forms as they talk about how the certification process is “far from perfect and I would be a liar if I were to say I loved everything about the process, but it is the only one we have to keep producers legit and to keep eaters informed” (Fat Chance Farmstead, n.d.). Some farms have a particular administrative structure for running the farm; cooperatives and their benefits are explained by fermeagricola:

It's #CoopWeek! Ferme Agricola is a worker's cooperative, which means that the four of us who work on the farm are also the owners of the business. 🧑🧑🧑🧑 As workers, we get to set the vision and goals for our farm based on our own needs, our health, and our values. For us, the cooperative structure offers a real-life vision of what more democratic and equitable workplaces can look like - workers get to decide on matters that directly affect them, and have control over the conditions of their labour! ✨ We also appreciate the tools the cooperative structure gives us for communicating and cooperating both within our team and with our peers, other coops, and our broader community. If you want to talk more about farm worker's cooperatives, please get in touch - we're happy to talk about our experiences so far! (Ferme Agricola, n.d.). [ID: Four windows of a building with a farmer looking out of each one].

Tracking chickens' weights is one of those administrative practices:

“Sometimes late night farming looks like this. On speaker phone with your partner who's in the barn, taking down the weights of 318 half chickens in an excel spreadsheet to be able to add them to your online store, include "average weight" data, and know

how much you should make on the lot” (Grazingdays, n.d.). [ID: Picture of a laptop with an open excel sheet].

Administrative tasks and planning are a group of practices that farmers do to keep their farms operating.

## Coping Practices

### *Joy and Pleasure*

The practice of joy is one that both farmers and members engage in. In some of the quotations below, you will find the experience of joy, a feeling of pleasure. The practice of joy, however, is an intentional attentiveness to joy, a deliberate and ongoing commitment to seeking out and experiencing joy. Circularlivingbook is talking about the pleasure in picking up the Farmhouse Food box:

I was so pleased to pick up this harvest box with my husband for his birthday, having conversations with farmers over a pint of local beer. This is truly farm to table. Nutritious, seasonal, organic foods all grown within 100 km from our family, and picked up directly from the farmers - all owners and participants in the cooperative. The @farm\_housefood harvest box includes seasonal vegetables, fennel sauerkraut, grass fed beef, raw cheese and more, all without plastic packaging. By supporting local farmers that are committed to ethical and ecological practices, we can support our local economy while supporting earth's seasons, soil and regenerative cycles. 🌱  
 #CircularLiving #LocalFarm #LocalFarmers #FarmToTable #organic  
 #OrganicFarming #EatLocal #RegenerativeAgriculture #regenerate  
 #CircularEconomy #LocalEconomy #LocalBusiness #csa #soil #SoilHealth  
 #OrganicMeat #GrassFed #ClosedLoop #ClosingTheLoop #ClimateAction  
 #FoodSystem #LocalFood #harvest #fermentation #FermentedFoods #ZeroWaste  
 #ZeroWasteKitchen #PlasticFree #InspiredByNature 🥕" (Alice Irene Whittaker, n.d.) [ID: Veggies in a wooden bowl].

My own notes after attending the same pick-up also record how pleasurable it was:

Our co-op box is lovely, and I really hope they do more . . . lots of people, kid friendly - toys and stamps and colouring, good to see [Name of "our" farmer], beer samples and food while waiting in line, it was a nice night. I also got to visit a local microbrewery (they hosted) which I don't think I've gotten to do since pre-kids. It's a much more comfortable and warm experience than waiting in line in [Name of Major Grocery Store Chain] (Field Notes On the Go, October 30, 2019).

The pleasure derived from participating was palpable in interviews. New foods were one source of joy. One member describes discovering the joy of a "a tomato sandwich with mustard and basil" and the anticipation of tomatoes appearing in the box and the joy when they do (M15). Another member explains that the pleasure derived from unfamiliar items in their vegetable and

meat boxes pushing them to explore new cooking techniques (M16). New foods are pleasurable surprises:

“Except the occasional, you know, item that we've never heard of. [laughs] And then that becomes kind of a fun challenge, you know. What do you do with a—? . . . Or wow! Well, all of a sudden, we've got tomatillos. Well, I've never done anything with those before. So, those are the pleasant surprises” (M22).

Surprises are a source of joy: “I like the idea of sort of renouncing a bit of control and being like, ‘Oh, I'm going to get a mystery box of vegetables this week.’ Like I'm always excited to see what's gonna be [in it], so it's just like fun” (M5). Pleasure is derived from the novelty of new items: “the new items are just really fun. And like googling, ‘What to do with x, y, z?’ It's just fun but simpler in a way. You just got what you're given, and it feels kind of nice” (M4).

Cooking and eating are pleasurable too: “Salad turnips were a revelation. And sautéing those with a little bit of butter and... sugar [chuckles] was just amazing” (M17). The additional food preparation labour is “it's a conscious decision and it's one that kind of bring us pleasure” (M23).

Pick-up is a source of pleasure for one member who notes: “I just find it very, very relaxing, you know. The—the birds are tweeting, and the bugs are buzzing, and the flowers are waving around. And you can walk down to the water, or what have you, and... it's very zen there” (M17). This was echoed by another member who noted that pickup is a “much more, like, aesthetically pleasing... experience, going to pick-up your food from... a farmer than it is... you know, selecting... items off of shelves in grocery stores” (M11).

Another member noted that research on CSA has pleasure too:

I was thinking of you, actually, when they were asking on CBC if you have hope or despair for the planet. I thought, “You know what? I bet Michelle is probably getting a little bit of inspiration, or like feeling a bit of a hope, because even though that—you know, there's a lot of people that aren't, there are a lot of people that [are] caring” (M20).

There is a lot of joy surrounding participation in CSA among members and there is also a lot of joy for the farmers. When asked what keeps them going, this farmer responded: “Well, oddly enough, I love it. You know there is nothing better than growing all this wonderful food” (F3). Job satisfaction features for another farmer, too: “I just definitely enjoy it. And as hard—as hard as it is, when you get those boxes packed, and they're all lined up, and they look so good. All the colors and everything, you know. That is just so satisfying” (F8). A farmer said of maple syrup production: “it’s just a nice time of year to be working outside after long winter. The weather is nice that time of year . . . everyone loves maple syrup. It's a great product to make. It's fun to make” (F5). Farmgatecider talks about Wassailing (like Beaujolais nouveau festivities but for cider) (Farmgate Cider, n.d.). We see joy in the farmers at fairsunfarm celebrating the solstice (Fair Sun Farm, n.d.). Cropthornefarm talks about spirits being high despite the damage to the broccoli (Lydia at Cropthorne Farm, n.d.). There is also wonder when fermeetforet realize they are housing chrysalides: “We were going to use this tractor implement but decided not to after finding 21 monarch chrysalis on it!” (Ferme et Forêt, n.d.). [ID: Monarch chrysalis in three pictures]. Monarchs are not the only creatures warming the hearts of the farmers. Grazingdays shares the joy of finding two turtles in two days: “It sure is heartwarming to see the biodiversity increasing on the farm. This is the 2nd turtle we've seen in as many days!” (Grazingdays , n.d.). [ID: A turtle in a field].

Fauna is not the only source of joy on the farm. Flora fills hearts with joy and this joy pushes back against a white, western epistemology. Lightly\_farmed shares:

I gasped when I saw this color combo today. So beautiful. It reminded me of one of my favorite chapters in *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer on Asters and Goldenrod. “I told him that I chose botany because I wanted to learn about why asters and goldenrod looked so beautiful together. I’m sure I was smiling then, in my new red plaid shirt. But he was not. He laid down his pencil as if there was no need to record what I had said. “Miss Wall,” he said, fixing me with a disappointed smile, “I must tell

you that that is not science. Beauty is not the sort of thing with which botanists concern themselves.”” But she said👉this gatekeeper and persisted and reading that book reassured me that there’s a place for me in this work. #InMyFeels #POCfarmers #FarmersOfColor (Lightly Farmed, Lucía León, n.d.). [ID: Picture of goldenrod amongst other flowers].

Whimsy also finds practice in farming. Why not a maple steam for your face? Fermeetforet shares their beauty routine:

Out of focus photo? Nope. This is how we see life these days, though the thick steam of evaporating maple sap! And the smell is divine. We've thought of opening a sap spa...ditch the eucalyptus sent and replace it with something a little more terroir.....maple.....Nous sommes 'dans les nuages' de sève d'érable de ces temps si....quelle joie !.#TempsDesSucres #SiropDErable #sirop #MapleSeason2019 #MapleSap #SapSpa #MapleSyrupSeason #MapleSyrupLove #MapleSyrup (Ferme et Forêt, n.d.). [ID: Two pictures of the steam in a sugar shack].

Joy and whimsy appear to sustain farmers through the other farming practices.

Zocaloorganics explains why seeking out joy is important amongst the myriad of other practices demanded by farming. As the farmer posting here, tenderfarmer who operated Zócalo Community Farm, provides farmer wellness training, this invitation to seek out joy is rooted in the goal of ensuring farming is sustainable for farmers:

You may not find it easy to achieve the balance you so long for; you will have bumps in the road, and terrible days. You will wonder how the hell there are still climate change deniers out there as you survey the damage after a big storm. Even with the sweetest goals and intentions for yourself or those you work with, remember that shit happens. So forgive yourself when it does. Make space for failure. May all the deep desires you have for whole and healthy farms come to fruition, and if they don't - may you find the grace to be with whatever is in front of you- one day at a time. AND if you feel yourself growing weary, collapsing into bed with a messy house and dirt-stained hands, find a way to look up. Look around. You have one of the most meaningful and important jobs on the planet, and you will only stay the course if you seek and find all the joy that is waiting for you in the fields (Zócalo Community Farm, n.d.). [ID: A picture of trees].

Practicing joy is common to both members and farmers. Farmers are more explicit about the necessity of practicing joy, but it is common to both.

### *Balance and Self-Care*

Alongside the practice of joy, we also see balance and self-care highlighted as necessary practices. In interviews, eight of the farmers noted the challenges associated with achieving work-life balance as a farmer. Three of the farmers noted shifts in their practices to ensure a healthy balance. As one farmer explained:

“My health is number one focus because if I can't be healthy, I can't do my job to make my community healthy. For many years I didn't put myself first. As I've grown older, wiser. I learnt that I have to come first and not just physically, mentally as well” (F1).

A farmer who had shifted her practices to ensure that she eats what she produces reflected on the early days when she did not eat what she grew:

“Because when people ordered them, I thought, “I've got to make money. I've got to make money. I've got to sell these.” And then the rule was that everything—all the best stuff went to the customers. And then, we got anything that wasn't, like, quite as nice. And then the chickens got the rest. [laughs] And most of the time, because everything was so nice, there wasn't anything left... for us” (F4).

Another farmer noted the impact that shifting from constant work to having days off had:

“In our first two years, [Partner's name] and I worked seven days, seven... seven-on, seven-on. And that we did not take any days off through the growing season. And we needed to. We were, you know, trying to make it happen. And this year, we are all taking one day off a week. Not this week because the weed pressure is too high in this moment. But in theory, we take one day off a week. And already I really notice the difference in how I feel emotionally, physically” (F10).

Farmers discussed the lack of days off. Creating downtime is a challenge. One farmer attributed the lack of downtime to the business model:

“I think if you're involved in this type of business, CSA-market-vegetable production your life is chaos. because it's 24 hours a day 365 there are no really days off very, few days off. It's very difficult, especially in our business where we have it year-round program. So, it's very challenging. It's very, very challenging” (F3).

Another farmer explains the tension between this business model and work-life balance: “I feel very lucky and privileged to do it. But I don't—I wanted to make it sustainable for me and part of



that isn't, you know, working forty-eight hours a day” (F2). One farmer explains that the constant demand for labour on the farm has impacts on mental and physical health of farmers:

“I think running a CSA farm and for farmers, I think—and especially in this—like, the early years is very stressful. It's very—really physically demanding . . . farmers have a—higher suicide rate among the farmers. There is a higher burnout rate, and it's very stressful. And... you know, like, right now for me personally, in the middle of the season, this is like one of the most stressful—stressful times for me. That, you know, there's a lot to do. Everything is going crazy. Everything is happening. All the—all the tasks of harvest to production, it's all happening. And there's only so many hours in the day that you can put in, or so much energy that you have that you can put in. And what's happening is if you work, you know, twelve-hour days every day, then there's something that's going to give. So, either it's going to be your leisure time, your—you know, your diet, or your sleep, or all of them. And you know, the—it could really have some negative health impacts that seem—it's really challenging to kind of separate yourself from the farm. But at the same time, farming is one of those jobs that require, you know labor. And if the labor is not there, then nothing really happens”(F6)

This tension created by the constant demand for labour is exacerbated by the childcare demands of a young family. One farmer explains that they have only been able to achieve a sense of balance by sacrificing “the financial... requirement. Because I prefer to [chuckles] spend my time, you know, taking the kids to the beach or something like that. Definitely, eventually, it would be nice to have both” (F8). Even in structures such as a workers cooperative where one of the central mandates is creating good jobs:

“to make sure everyone takes time off has been pretty hard. But we were expecting that in our first year. I mean we are, I think a central goal for us in the medium to long term is to reduce the hours of our work week to more normal non-farming schedule and to have proper weekends and that everyone can take a vacation and all of that. So that's something we're working towards. But, certainly is not the case this year” (F9).

On social media, we see farmers discussing how to care for yourself in light of a business model that demands so much labour. Self-care is highlighted by goodheartfarmstead who is looking for tips and tricks to sustain oneself:

how can I tend to myself more throughout the year? ❤️ How can I create the time to take care of myself in the rush of spring 🌱 the high and fast energy of summer 🌻 the heavy haul of fall? 🥕 How about you — do you throw self care to the wind come

growing season and save it all up for winter? Or have you figured out how to take care of yourself year-round? (Katie Spring, n.d.).

Finding balance – between the CSA and market – while negotiating new pest challenges creates a precarious situation highlighted by freerootsfarm:

come out the other side of the season with a better understanding of how to balance the CSA and market aspects of our small farm so that one doesn't take away from the other. 2019 presented problems we've never faced before like infestations and disease. Crops we've grown with ease in the past failed entirely, BUT we learned SO MUCH and we still managed to have a successful year (Free Roots Farm, n.d.).

Achieving a balance between the business of farming and your life is a challenging practice:

When you are the only person running a (farm) business, finding a balance between making the necessary revenue and not working so hard that you don't ever leave the farm and your friends and family can't remember what you look like, that can be a tricky one. (Although it is one I know I am lucky to have, and I wouldn't trade it for anything.) (Heidi, n.d.)

Finding balance sometimes means cutting back on some of the responsibilities. Twinkletoesfarm explains the decision to pull out of one of their markets:

I will no longer be vending at the @enumclawplateaufarmersmarket effective immediately. I'm hoping to work on improving my systems and building my capacity so that i [sic] can return next year, but right now it's too much. My kids are suffering, my wife is suffering, my farm is suffering and something has to change (Monica Anderson Burnison, n.d.).

Sometimes balance does not happen. Rather farmers push through as explained by

localcolorfarmandfiber:

It's been the sort of week where I too want to dig a hole and hide, between infrastructure woes, pest pressure, and getting behind on weeding and mowing and everything else. We're digging a real long trench for electrical service tomorrow, which every farmer loves to do in May. The farm doesn't stop for anyone though, so it's time to just keep your head down and work through it! (Emily Tzeng, n.d.).

Balance involves an attentiveness to the demands of farming, sometimes involves pulling back from those demands, and sometimes pushing through them. Self-care is a necessary farming practice but less clearly defined.

### Social Movement Practices

There were no questions in the interviews about philanthropy, protests, advocacy, or participation in social movement organizations. However, in interviews farmers explained the importance of being involved in the National Farmers Union (F10, F6), and the importance of cooperative structures to labour conditions (F6, F9), and the desire to “ ‘lead by example’ or . . . ‘be the change’ ” (F7). When coding social media posts, it was clear that farmers do a lot of philanthropy, participation in labour and advocacy organizations, advocacy, and protest. This research project overlapped with the Climate Strikes of 2019 which saw protests in the Ottawa Valley in which local farmers marched. Farmers shared social media posts about the Climate Strikes and other protests in 2019.

In terms of philanthropy, farmers were not asked during interviews about donations, but some did mention donations to local food banks and food centers (F10, F9, F6). When signing up for CSA myself, most CSA that I have participated in had an affordability fund to donate to. We see an example of affordability funds advertised in a post by Fieldgoodfarms (Isabelle Spence-Legault, n.d.):

Through our community's amazing donations to @ahavahcommunityinitiative we have been able to DONATE 1,300 CSA shares to people in need in just 1 Year! That number is astounding and really, truly, something to celebrate! ❤️ (Ahavah Farm, n.d.) [ID: Text “In the past year, Ahavah Farm and Ahavah Community Initiative have donated 64 CSA shares to people in need. That’s over \$26, 000.00 of fresh, local, regeneratively grown produce. It means that we have provided a total of almost 1,300 Weekly CSA packages to families in need in JUST ONE YEAR!!!! This is in addition to all of the other initiatives including environmental initiatives, the 1,000’s of hours of classroom and hands-on education and events we provide and our grow-a-farmer programs and more” and the re-gram symbol as the post was shared from the @ahavahcommunityinitiative feed. The re-gram symbol obscured two words which I grabbed from the original post].

Farmers also donate their time and labour to solidarity and advocacy organizations. One of the farmers works as a National Farmers Union president, “the equivalent of a part-time job. But

it's not a compensated position” (F10). Another farmer, also active in the NFU, observed that they started their cooperative with the motivation:

to create good employment in a sector that is primarily dominated by very poor employment standards. And in that tier specifically, farmworkers have very little rights compared to any other worker. So, there's no minimum wage, no vacation, no breaks. Like, the list goes on. It's barbaric. It's, like, ancient (F6).

Farmers are active in many organizations and attend conferences. Zocaloorganics explains in two posts about Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) conferences, that the conference includes sessions on farming with kids and childcare (Zócalo Community Farm, n.d.).

Rootedoakfarm attended the EFAO conference and links their attendance with World Soil Day, their environmental beliefs, and why they farm:

Happy world soil day to you all. ❤️ What does soil mean to you? To us it is the canvas on which we paint our environmental beliefs. 🌱 We farm as a way to have a positive impact on the environment, to feed our community, and to contribute to a diverse on farm ecosystem. 🌟 It is timely for us to be at the @efao2 (ecological farmers association of Ontario) conference on this day, renewing our passion for why we do what we do and finding solidarity with like minded people. 🤝 Farming is not always easy, in fact it's often exhausting, stressful, but also exhilarating. Why do you choose to farm or to support local farmers?! Comment below! ❤️ #EFAOconference2019 (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). [ID: Hand holding soil and a worm].

Advocacy ranges from doing conference presentations, to attending public meetings, to encouraging folks to get out and vote. Footprintfarm presented to a conference in Vermont about the precariousness and stress of operating a “successful” farm (Taylor & Jake Mendell, n.d.).

Paul from Grazing Days explains to young farmers how to integrate their politics with their farming:

Paul taking full advantage of the slower season. This morning he spoke to the participants of the National Farmers Union's Youth Convergence on following one's political ideals and farming. Thanks for the opportunity National Farmers Union (Grazingdays, n.d.). [ID: Two pictures of Paul speaking to a room full of people].

Farmers are also active in local politics not necessarily related to farming. Rochongarden attended a “Changing the Deal at Lansdown” public meeting (Rochon Garden, n.d.). Fatchancefarmstead urged people to get out and vote in the election using the hashtag #ClimateChange (Fat Chance Farmstead, n.d.). Other farms chimed in with calls to vote (Cedar Knoll Farm, n.d., Regenerative Agriculture & Permaculture Farm, n.d., Funny Duck Farms, n.d.). Advocacy practices also extend to longer term projects or boots-in-the-streets. Sometimes advocacy looks like recruiting folks to fill, tie, and pile-up sandbags in anticipation of flooding:

Have a few hours to help out with flood preparations? The communities of #WestCarleton, residents of #britannia and #cumberland would appreciate the help. Check out the city of Ottawa website or just show up at the nearest pile of sand. #OttFlood (Ferme BeetBox Farm #OttCity, n.d.). [ID: Picture of sandbagging].

On September 27, 2019, tens of thousands of protesters marched in Ottawa demanding steps to reverse climate change (Pritchard, 2019). This strike was one of the many planned in one hundred and fifty countries for that week and enjoyed the support of local school boards and postsecondary institutions (Miller, 2019). I marched with the kids in a double-stroller. It was a beautiful sunny autumn day with blue skies. Parliament Hill and Wellington were packed with people of all ages. Living in the National Capital Region affords us access to protests on Parliament Hill and farms in the Ottawa Valley enjoy this same access. These protests were held a little over a month before I completed the interview portion of my research. At the time of the protests, I had completed all but one interview with farmers and nineteen of twenty-six interviews with members. Social media posts were a rich source of data on those who attended that I did not see in the crowd that day. The climate strikes in 2019 saw CSA farmers and members take to the streets and then share their protest on social media. Rootsandshootsfarm urged people to go “take a stand for our planet” in downtown Ottawa:

We DO NOT inherit the earth from our ancestors, we BORROW it from our children.” Being farmers we notice climate change perhaps more than many. Today there is a climate strike in downtown Ottawa and we urge you to go and take a stand for our planet. We all live here, it’s the only home we have. Fight for it (Roots and Shoots Farm, n.d.). [ID: Sunset on a farm, buildings and farm machinery silhouetted].

Fermeagricola marched on Parliament Hill with other farmers and explained the connection between their farming and the protests like this:

We have chosen to be farmers in a time of ongoing and increasing climate emergency, and in many ways, we have chosen to farm because of the climate emergency we all face. 🌍 It can be terrifying to think about the impacts a changing climate will have on our lives and livelihood, but for us, producing food ecologically for our local communities feels like the best way to put our hopes for a better future into action on a daily basis. ✨ There are so many ways to work for the world you want to see, and we were reminded today that each person can create that future through their own lives, work, and actions. We are especially inspired by the Indigenous youth leaders who are at the forefront of this fight. ❤️ Favourite sign of the day, from a very young marcher: “We are so lucky to have this planet!” 😭 (Ferme Agricola, n.d.). [ID: Picture of six women and two men standing on Parliament Hill with the clocktower in the background during the climate strike. All but two I recognize as farmers from local farms. Holding signs saying “Young Farmers for Climate Justice” “Do whatever you can do” “Regenerative Agriculture Fights Climate Change” “As a farmer, I carr-a-lot (with a picture of a carrot) about our climate lettuce (picture of lettuce) squash (picture of squash) inaction” and “Healthy Soil =Healthy Climate = Healthy Humans”].

Farmers marched on Parliament Hill but also beyond. We see just outside Ottawa, in the Outaouais, farmers marched in the climate strike (Croquez l’Outaouais, n.d.), [ID: Picture of Paul Slomp from Grazing Days and other Farmers marching in the climate strike. One visible sign in French reads “Ensemble pour la planete”], and (Grazingdays, n.d.). [ID: Three wide angle shots of groups of people marching in climate strike]. However, Parliament Hill in Ottawa was the gathering point for many of the local farms. Catenafarm marched on Parliament Hill, accompanied by kids:

We took an important afternoon away from the farm to participate in the Global Climate Strike. It was so amazing to march through the streets with thousands of people who care about the state of our planet and are calling for immediate action. It will be hard to ignore such a unified voice and we look forward to the next step in this global revolution (Catena Farm, n.d.). [ID: Three pictures, one of a baby with a sign

in the stroller “It’s not easy being green but we can do it”, a wide angle shot of the climate strike on Parliament Hill, and a shot with two women, two children, and the baby. The kids and adults are holding signs and the baby is asleep. The same sign as the first, along with “climate change with political change” and the kids are carrying matching “our planet, our future” signs].

Fermelevetot was another farm that marched in Ottawa, accompanied by children:

@fermelevetot representing at the #ClimateStrike with thousands of others on parliament hill today. Thank for being part of the solution by supporting local organic agriculture! (Ferme Léve-tôt, n.d.). [ID: shot of an adult female and a child sitting on parliament hill with a sign that reads “I don’t want to move to Mars” with a picture of Mars and an X, picture of Earth and a check mark].

Rootedoakfarm, a CSA farm in the Ottawa Valley, explained their absence and provided meta-commentary for their own work which they see as a type of climate action:

It's inspiring to see so many people participating in the global climate strike today. Putting action to our words is exactly how we will all solve the climate crisis unfolding all around us. As we are furiously harvesting for our weekend markets today we are feeling incredibly conflicted at being unable to participate in today's event. Much of what we do on our farm is informed by our commitment to sustainability and the desire to give more back to the soil and earth than we take away. As we work to create a food system which is more sustainable, we are grateful to everyone who took and is taking the time today to put their bodies on the street, lead by example and show those people in power that climate change isn't just another issue and it doesn't need a business-as-usual approach. We need broad systemic change to meet the moment and time we find ourselves a part of and leaders, corporations and everyday people to make it happen. #ClimateStrike (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). [ID: Three shots of farmers in the fields, carrying wheelbarrows, with a dog, and picking carrots].

Despite not being able to attend the Climate Strike, rootedoakfarm did attend Youth Rising Climate Action:

We attended the youth rising climate action on parliament hill today. As organic farmers and young people the effects of climate change will certainly have a significant impact on our lives. We see standing in solidarity with actions like this one today are an extension of the work we do on yhe (sic) farm to not just adapt but also mitigate the effects if climate change. Agriculture is often held up as one of the primary contributors of climate change and while it is true that as a whole it represents roughly the 6th largest contributor in Canada its important to know that many farms are actively working to combat the effects of climate change and that farms of all types (vegetable,meat,dairy eggs and grain) can adopt practises which will reduce their

impact and for many of us create conditions which will put the carbon back into the soil. 🌍🌍🌍 #KnowYourFood #KnowYourFarmer #CarbonSequestrationWithoutRepresentation #SchoolStrikeForClimateChange #ListenUp (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). [ID: Picture of a sign on parliament hill “Water is sacred No pipelines”].

We see in both these posts, advocacy, protest, and awareness raising around environmental issues.

Two of the farms interviewed had farmers that were involved in the National Farmers Union. One of these farmers, who is on the NFU Board, explains the distinction between their role in advocacy and collective action and individual choices:

I’m—personally, myself, like I—I’m an advocate and also, I believe that our... involvement in terms of like making environmental choices, I think that there’s more value personally in getting involved and like, kind of in collective action, in terms of making a—you know, really tackling climate change issues and pollution, than there is in individual action. So, for me personally, I don’t really subscribe too much to try to, like, have zero waste, or limit the amount I drive, or you know—for those reasons. But at the same time, it then gives—frees up more of my time and mental energy to think about—to volunteer, actually. So, I’m on the board of our local chapter for the National Farmers Union. And that’s a—that’s a group that is a collective of famers that are, you know, actively changing or advocating for different policies that help family farms in Canada, but in Ontario and in Ottawa as well. So, you know like, a great example being that, you know, those monthly meetings and those meetings are often far away, and I drive my vehicle. And I have, you know—I pollute to get there. But the purpose of the meeting is that we could then have a greater impact on the landscape of agriculture in Canada. And for me, those issues are really extremely important. And I think we’ll really in a crisis state when it comes to—to young farmers and new farmers, and regenerative farming, and how we’re supporting agriculture in Canada, that—it’s really worth it for me to be involved and to expand my energy in that way, to have a greater impact (F6).

Members also engaged in advocacy. This member explains their efforts to get rid of single use plastics in a charitable organization:

I mean what I do is a drop in a bucket and—but it's still a drop. That's all I can do. I can't change the world. I can only change what I do and share what I do with other people and if they want to follow that, that's fine and if not, that—you know? Yeah . . . So I belong to a group in [neighbourhood in the Ottawa valley] and we raise funds. And our group, that’s our sole purpose is raising funds. So, we hold events, and I’m instrumental in getting our events green. No more single use plastic, no more



throwaway stuff, all this kind of stuff. So, they were all on board, so that was my big thing, to change that around. And we have to take care of the environment because what we do here affects [fundraising target geographic region], affects every other nation. That was my project and I'm very happy to report that everybody's online—onboard with that (M7).

Another member, who advocates by making films about food issues, explained that boots-in-the-streets protests are not the only strategy:

it doesn't reach people for whatever reason. It's too intellectual. It's too in your face sometimes and I think we need to get artistic . . . I think that will get people faster than in your face, "march". Just because -- those work and those would get an audience, but they have a limitation and then I think it's the artist and the writers that need to come in and then, and then influence them (M1).

Advocacy, organization, and philanthropy are a group of practices that we see farmers engage with in both punctuated and ongoing ways. The climate strikes and school strikes in 2019 made some of these practices more visible on social media but we can see longer term advocacy and philanthropy in involvement in organizations like the National Farmers Union and in ongoing donation programs.

**Practices Summary**

Farmers and members engage in a diverse range of practices relating to their involvement in CSA. Teaching practices include explaining practices to others, education, and skills related practices, as well as parenting. Members and farmers spend a lot of time explaining their practices to others, teaching others how to do these practices, and providing embodied experiential learning opportunities so these practices can be reproduced. Both members and farmers explain to others what they are doing and why they are doing it. For members we see this in three areas, the promotion of CSA on social media, the explanation and justification of their practices to family members and recommending CSA to others. Choosing practices related to CSA or complementary to CSA often involves explaining those choices. Recommendation is very important for CSA. Farmers also describe themselves, explaining the characteristics of their farm and what practices they engage with on the farm. Farmers get people to purchase their products by explaining the characteristics of the farm. Farmers explain who they are and what they provide throughout their social media and broader marketing presence, however, some posts engage with more explicit marketing practices. Both farmers and members explain their practices verbally and via social media. Farmers teach and learn, as well as celebrating skills and education. Parenting for both farmers and members involves a cluster of practices, many of which involve explaining or teaching. For farmers, this involves the delicate negotiation of engaging children with farm life and farm chores, the satisfaction and joy with watching them explore these chores, and the strain from trying to balance parenting and farming. For members, parenting involves more explaining and modeling practices to children. Farmers balance the demands of parenting with the demands of farming which shifts how they practice farming. Parents balance the demands of parenting with the demands of food preparation which shifts how

they practice cooking. Socializing children into the foodscape of CSA is a practice that parents who are CSA members and who are farmers do. This involves teaching via the socialization and modeling of eating food, sourcing food, and producing food.

Relationships root many of the practices associated with CSA. Farmers and members engage in practices to maintain their relationships. Relational practices include the social niceties of maintaining relationships with other farmers, the communication work that is required to maintain relationships with members, remembering names and faces, remembering the names of family members, remembering who likes dark leafy greens, and connecting with people on an intellectual and emotional level. How members make their way into CSA, how they make the switch and do the research to join CSA are influenced by relationships. CSA participation requires signing up and showing up. For many members, this is an iterative process over a few years. There is a wide range of research done before members join a CSA from not very much to quite substantial research in advance of joining. Existing relationships are a source of information and sometimes introduce CSA. The reduction of food waste is also related to the relationships experienced by members. Reducing food waste is a practice members link with their relationships to the farm and the farmer.

Food practices associated with CSA participation include food procurement and preparation. Members noted that they experienced an unexpected reduction in reproductive labour load while participating in CSA. However, there was a trade off with food preparation. The reduction in labour and decision-making practices for food procurement was countered by an increase in food preparation practices. CSA impacted the reproductive labour of members by reducing procurement work, increasing planning work, increasing preparation or cleaning work, but seemed to not change cooking style of participants. A more visible food practice is the

contextualized cooking made visible by social media. In describing their cooking practices, many of the members describe a playfulness around cooking, a sense of experimentation. Members provide context for the playful experimentation and pleasure derived from these cooking practices with support for the practices of the farmers. Farmers sometimes celebrate their own produce by cooking it and engaging in promotion and contextualization. However, we also see that often farmers are too busy to cook for themselves. Reproductive labour competes with their farm labour.

Health practices are also a dimension of CSA participation for some members and farmers. Members and farmers alike engaged in practices that they described as being related to their health. The vegetable share is understood as a way of regulating healthy eating - either by getting enough vegetables by finishing the share, or by reducing consumption in other areas, or ensuring diversity of consumed vegetables.

Alongside CSA participation, we see members and farmers engage in several complementary sustainability practices. Reducing waste, reducing consumption by purchasing less, less frequently, or secondhand, and reducing gasoline-powered transportation by choosing a different home or changing the mode of transportation. While members were explicit that these complementary sustainability practices were not caused by CSA, they also noted that they are related insofar as they are undergirded by similar values.

Farming practices are a key part of CSA participation for both members and farmers. These farming practices include explicitly environmental practices inclusive of zero waste, protecting and rehabilitating soil, protecting water, carbon-neutral practices, and the avoidance of chemicals to varying degrees. Farmers also perform work associated with growing the vegetables and raising the meat, as well as planning and bookkeeping. These tasks include temperature

management, infrastructure creation and building, harvesting, seed trials, among others.

Administrative tasks and planning are a group of practices that farmers do to keep their farms operating.

Coping practices are deployed by farmers and include the practices of joy and pleasure, along with balance and self-care. The practice of joy, however, is an intentional attentiveness to joy, a deliberate and ongoing commitment to seeking out and experiencing joy. Joy and whimsy appear to sustain farmers through the other farming practices. Practicing joy is common to both members and farmers. Farmers are more explicit about the necessity of practicing joy, but it is common to both. Balance involves an attentiveness to the demands of farming, sometimes involves pulling back from those demands, and sometimes pushing through them. Self-care is a necessary farming practice but less clearly defined.

Social movement practices are engaged with by both members and farmers, inclusive of philanthropy, donations to local food banks and food centers, participation in labour and advocacy organizations, advocacy, and protest. Farmers are active in many organizations and attend conferences. Advocacy ranges from doing conference presentations, to attending public meetings, to encouraging folks to get out and vote. The climate strikes and school strikes in 2019 made some of these practices more visible on social media but we can see longer term advocacy and philanthropy in involvement in organizations like the National Farmers Union and in ongoing donation programs.

### Chapter 5: How people talk about what they do, meta commentary

What motivates participation in CSA? Members and farmers described a wide range of intentions relating to their participation in Community Supported Agriculture:

It's really what you make of it, I think. So, you know, if you go on something saying, "I am doing a CSA because for me, I want to accomplish community building." Then maybe you're lingering and talking to [Name of Farmer] at the stall and saying "Hi" to other members. If for you it's just your goal is to get local food and you don't mind if you're just like zip in and out, right? So very much, yeah, your intention[s] set what you get out of those things (M4).

There is a great deal of overlap in intentions between farmers and members, but this is not always the case. As observed by one farmer, "We put out a survey every year. And I find that the reasons we farm, are not the reasons our customers buy our food. And it's a hard, tougher battle" (F10). Themes mentioned by farmers and members include sustainable labour conditions, support for farmers, food security and prefigurative practices, the environment, good food, health, community, boycotting the other, parenting, and vegetarianism and ethical meat. While I have taken the liberty of dividing the intentions of participants into themes, for participants, they are not separate. Often members were explicit about the connection between different intentions, "They're one in the same in my mind. Our health and our environment; they are closely intertwined" (M3). We see this intermingling of intentions in the two quotes from a couple who interviewed separately below:

It's an idea of just eating cleaner and healthier. I don't know, but—I don't know if you know, but my wife went through a pretty major cancer scare. And so, we haven't always had the best eating habits in the world, so it was—even before that, it was changing. But since that, it's changed completely . . . we've become... much more empathetic towards the, you know, animals, and how they're—how they're raised and how they're slaughtered, and... the so on and so forth. So, that whole ethical thing and the environmental thing all works together . . . I think that's—although we do not have a community that we—that we are part of, I think we're part of a global community, of people who are just... re-organising their lives. I mean, we can see—we can see right now with climate change that... I think, drastic change has to take place in our world. Even if we're going to survive. And so, we've taken some of those drastic

changes—quite a few, actually. And... more in the future. And I would really like to—to see a day when, you know—when... when life is different. When life is better . . . I think it's really important I get to support a... a family. I get to—to be a part of a community that supports a family, so that they can live out their philosophy, their dreams (M18).

I think the main motivator was healthy eating. Then—that would be the main motivator. I knew that it was organic. There wasn't any toxic chemicals being sprayed on what I was eating. I liked the fact that... I knew the farmer. I didn't know him personally. But he is a friend of my daughter's—family friend. Even if I'd hadn't known him, it was just nice that... he was in the community, and we were helping support his family, and he was a hardworking individual, you know. And I really liked that aspect of it that—that my vegetable and my dinner plate suddenly had faces to them, you know. Like, okay, there's kids. We're supporting his family (M19).

This couple described a confluence of factors: health issues, the suggestions, help, and influence of their daughter, and shifting values, as contributing to joining a CSA. We also see with this couple, and with members generally, intentions change, expand, and become further entrenched. We will see as we explore the motivations of farmers and members that farmers and members co-produce the motivations for CSA participation. What are the intentions of the farmers and members who participate in CSA?

### Sustainable Labour Conditions

Creating sustainable labour conditions for farmers was a motivation mentioned by both farmers and members. Farms that had messaging around labour practices had members who mentioned labour practices in their interviews (M20, M13, M24, M25, M26, M6, M7, M9, & Copy of Text From Instagram Posts, 2020, 40 & 72). Supporting farms who were ensuring fair wages and working conditions is important to the members:

And I was really happy about some of the—you know, some of the [social media] posts of these that are—that have come out talking about worker rights. And act—you know, like, making sure people are paid a fair wage, and that kind of thing. And that was important to us, that that played into the role of the CSA. Knowing that the people that are working at the farm, from what we understood, [Name of Farm] is paying them well enough. Like, a good wage. And that's always—whatever we do, that plays a role as well. Because we just—you know that people—you know, labour is—in all kinds, is valuable. And whatever type of labour, that it's worth something . . . anything related to food is worth a lot. Because we need food to survive. So, even though others might not see it as that, that it's a type of work that . . . is it as valuable as like, you know, intellectual labour or something. . . that was a motivator for us, was to . . . know that whoever we were working with, or getting our food from, was going to be contributing to workers that way (M20).

There is a sense that while members do play an important role in defining their motivations for participating in CSA, the farms and their messaging are also important in defining the problems and solutions that motivate CSA participation. The farms that had labour-related messaging also centred labour issues in their organizational structure. Both farms that had labour messaging in their social media were organized as cooperatives:

we're a workers cooperative. So our, one of our central mandates is making, to create good jobs for ourselves and yeah just good jobs on our farm. So, we definitely were driven by that desire and to want to create a business that reflected our values. Both in terms of like labour conditions but also environmental values . . . We did have certain CSA members sign-up. Like a handful, maybe, three people or something, who when they signed up, they said that was like a specifically a draw for them. And especially being a majority-women owned co-op, I think appealed to certain people (F9).



Reflections on the sustainability of farming for the farmers and labour conditions were not limited to farms structured as co-operatives:

it was a six-generation family farm and I kind of wanted to pay homage to that, you know, and there's certainly some of that in there. The sentimentality that I promised to myself was that, you know, if we—like, I was trying to be motivated by practicality and business and not just getting hung up on nostalgia . . . And I think my dad held a lot of guilt for, you know, trying to keep the farm going and that kind of stuff. At pretty substantial financial costs to my parents. And I didn't want to make that same thing, because to me, you know... sustainability around farming has to do with also being able to make money. Like, and I don't mean that in a greedy way. I just mean, like... it's like any business. Like if you like a business, and you want to keep doing it, it's like you do have to be able to put bread on the table. And I just feel like my parents certainly weren't really doing a good job of that” (F2).

Sustainability for the farmers in terms of physical, mental, emotional, and financial health is a challenge. Farmers find it challenging to balance the idealism of farming with the realities of operating a business in a personally and financially sustainable way (F2). The demands of farming make it hard to achieve a balance between getting stuff done and not burning out (F2). These difficulties are further exacerbated by the challenge of turning a profit and making money (F4, F8). There are dreams of hiring more people to achieve work-life balance so that “no-one’s working crazy, crazy hours, and people are getting paid fairly” (F2). Farmers noted that hiring people would also allow an increase in production capacity so farmers can “make more food” (F4). One farmer wondered how customers understand work-life balance for farmers (F2).

Members are attentive to labour practices:

I mentioned about the labour practices. Like, I felt better about buying from those farmers who, like, have a really nice cooperative work style—work environment. You hear terrible things about some labour practices for migrant workers and things like that who work on farms—big farms in Canada. So, I think, like, better labour standards, I think would be one social benefit, so yeah (M24).

As noted above, members whose farms discussed labour practices on social media brought up labour practices in the interviews. Members explained that there is a connection between labour

conditions on farms and the pressure created by the macroeconomic situation. The understanding of the connection between the economic environment the farms operate in and the labour conditions on the farm cultivates loyalty to the farmers:

I feel like my commitment to the farmers has grown because through this experience I've learned how unbelievably difficult it is for businesses to survive, these organic, small organic farms. And like how these little farmers are making and how, you know, it's seeing 'expensive' food, but they are still barely getting by. It makes me really aware of the unhealthy, sort of, macroeconomic situation relative to agriculture and food issues and the massive subsidization of large corporations and so forth and expectation of low cost of food amongst consumers and, oh my God, you know the impacts of mono-culture and all of that. So, I feel like my commitment to both the farmers, as individuals, and to what they are doing has grown. Because it just sort of breaks my heart how hard they have to work and how the rewards are still relatively limited for them (M2).

Members described the unique time crunch of farming and the tension between administration and harvesting demands:

If I could give farmers, an extra twenty hours a week. I would love to be able to do that for them . . . Weekends off. You know time and money to be able to may be a hire someone that is dedicated to be admin instead of you know waking up in the morning and saying, okay I have eight hours ahead of me or ten hours or twelve hours do I you know set up the computer and to use some seriously needed admin work or do I go and harvest. Because if I don't we're going to lose the stuff. So if I could, if magic were my super power that would be really cool, to be able to somehow give farmers time and money and space for that kind of thing (M6).

Members connect shopping local and providing direct financial support for farms with the labour practices at those farms. Members making the connection between support for farms and labour practices correlates with farms discussing labour issues in their social media content. Both farmers and members identify sustainable labour conditions as motivating CSA participation.

### Support for Farmers: Food Security and Prefigurative Practices

Members described the importance of supporting farmers (M1, M12, M22, M3, M24, M5, M23, M9, M2, M11, M7, M18, M14, M15, M17), the role of prefigurative practices (M23, M4), and the importance of specific farming practices in interviews (M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M13, M14, M15, M16, M17, M19, M20, M22, M23, M24, M25, M26). The support for farmers is explained in terms of food security, local food autonomy, and to ensure the continuation of these valued farming practices.

Food security motivates members who explain that their support of local farmers contributes the local food economy. This support is explained by members as a means for buttressing food security and prefigurative practices. By sourcing their food locally, members feel they are buttressing the local food system, thereby contributing to food security. Supporting the lifestyle of the farmers is tied to with improving local economies and local communities by members (M1). Members are vocal about their support for the local food economy:

Wanting to support—like, wanting to kind of contribute to supporting a local food economy, and trying to reduce the... you know, amount of—like, my contribution to, like, shipping food over massive distances. And also, like, questionable labor practices . . . corporate industrial food systems (M24).

Members explain that shopping local is linked to food security. Shopping local includes supporting the farmers “directly financially” and “knowing who is making my food” (M5). The importance of direct financial support for farmers was repeated throughout the interviews by members, for example this member’s comment: “I liked the idea of like supporting the local farmers, too. Just in that like kind of guaranteed that they have that income” (M23). Support for local farmers and the local food economy is seen by members as contributing to autonomy: “It’s just once again helping local farmers because our country used to be way more autonomous and isn’t now” (M9). Food security is not as developed conceptually as environmental stewardship,

but it is still richly described by members. Just as environmental stewardship is linked with multiple practices and concepts, food security is tied in with other intentions:

I'd say it's food security, it's supporting good—good environmental land use—you know, organic farming. And... even just the—I just—I like the community aspect of it. That, you know, although... she might not be my neighbor, this is—I have a relationship with the person who is producing my food. And that, for me, is... a different kind of security, I guess. I just—I appreciate the food more because of that. I know the person who's worked hard to produce it. And it—just, it places more value on the food, for me. And I think for—I'm trying to do this for my kids as well. So, they know that—you know, that this the food that's come from the farmer down the road, as opposed to the grocery store (M22).

Members explain the link between their support of local farmers, by shopping local and providing financial support that benefits farmers directly, with keeping farmers in the community and food security. The desire to support local economies by spending in the community is motivated by “socio-political reasons” and this support hopes to maintain “infrastructure for local food” as an alternative to large grocery store chains – this member also noted (above) that the potential higher carbon footprint of supporting small local farms was an acceptable cost (M11). Members are attentive to ensuring that their support goes to local farmers when they are shopping at farmers’ markets, as well:

I mean, supporting local agriculture...you know, I think that we were accomplishing that . . . buying from farmers at farmer's markets. You know, I'm not going to farmer's markets and buying from the wholesalers, but actually from farmers, for example . . . that's not something that's changed with the CSA. It's just our dollars, I guess are spent in a different matter (M11).

Support for local farmers is understood to exclude wholesalers. Support for local farmers is explicitly inclusive of income: “I was looking for local produce . . . I liked the idea of like supporting the local farmers, too. Just in that like kind of guaranteed that they have that income” (M23). Support for local farmers is understood to impact food security and autonomy: “It's just once again helping local farmers because our country used to be way more autonomous and isn't

now” (M9). Members see autonomy as one component of food security, that we are “better off eating what’s grown on our own land rather than shipping it over” (M1). Food Security is understood to be inclusive of succession planning as well, as explained by this member:

The fact that food security, like, food security, you know. I know, for example, that -- and I think people know -- that we have a very small percentage of farmers. So, like, in ten years our succession planning is looking pretty grim; with two percent of that population is farming and it's going to decrease so I think it's pushing for us to support these young people predominantly who are getting into farming . . . Well, I think a lot about, like importation. I'm all for fair trade. Even coffee and chocolate it's never gonna grow in Canada. We need to have good relationships with, you know, certain foods that we bring in. We also have a very, you know, diverse society so I understand for a lot of people to have culture and community, there's things that we need to import. But I think that, from a standpoint of, like, what we don't need to import, I think that's what I mean by food security so we better off eating what's grown in our own land rather than shipping it over and so I just that's when I think about food security, especially now with the disasters. You know, I think emergency preparedness, like we need to have our own food growing. I think we need to support that (M1).

Direct financial support for the farmers via shares is explained by members as being essential to the existence of these farmers and food security. Members also link direct financial support via shopping locally with their environmental goals. Members are motivated by:

the environment, to support local. You know, if they don't get the support, as I said, they're going to have to pack up and leave because they have to make a living as well. So I don't mind paying the extra for that because, you know, they have families, they have to feed their kids (M7).

Members explain that supporting local agriculture is seen as a component of participating in a larger “food security movement”:

Wanting to support local agriculture. I'm a big believer that, you know, supporting local agricultural economy—and part of that's this—you know, the whole food security thing is part of the answer to—as a community, having a more—leading a more sustainable life. And so, I'm just—you know, I'm just happy to be part of that food security movement, and support, you know, small farmers, whatever I can . . . what food security means, is that we're supporting... farmers, and which—who are and turn helping us to make sure that we have—that a local food supply is important. And that we don't depend on economies in other parts of the world to provide our food for us. So, that's for me what's food security means (M22).

We see in the above quote, the invocation of community, sustainability, and maintaining a local food supply, alongside concerns about pesticide used and autonomy from “economies in other parts of the world” (M22).

Supporting local farmers is linked to issues beyond food security and environmental concerns. Members saw their support of the farm as a way of supporting a system which had the goal of health rather than supporting “the great big agricultural machine” which has the goal of profit (M18). This support of farmers was also described as “helping young people” by paying a little more as “farming is hard work” (M14). “A young person starting their business” needs the support of the community (M17). Supporting the farmers is framed as a moral issue: “Plus, to be honest with you, it's that moral of who are you supporting . . . support people trying to make their way” (M15). This support of the farmers is understood to facilitate the dreams and aspirations of the farmers: “I think it's really important I get to support a . . . a family. I get to—to be a part of a community that supports a family, so that they can live out their philosophy, their dreams” (M18). We see in these quotes a desire to support young members of the community who are starting out in life and in their business. Support for local farmers is understood as a turn away from a profit-driven system.

The desire to support farmers to “live out their philosophy” (M18), however, indicates a slightly different intentionality. Prefigurative practices - supporting those who are living their values, living your values as an example to others to show it is possible – features in the motivations of both farmers and members.

We had our own problems in terms of, like, understanding how food was produced, and being—not being super okay with that, especially meat. And organic—organics and then permaculture . . . so that kind of research, and looking at documentaries and things like that, we started forming ideas . . . [we] want to shape lives to . . . our vision for how we wanted our lives to be. And it led us in that direction. And the idea—once we'd found like a variable business model, which was like mostly illuminated through

Jean-Martin's book, and we—it became a sort of real possibility. Like, something tangible. And you know, we—we wanted to learn. And we also wanted to teach. And we wanted to show—sort of like, 'lead by example', or you know, 'be the change' type of thing. And... yeah. That was what really bought us into it. And then the CSA model itself was really, you know—that was what made it actually fiscally... you know, a real sort of possibility (F7).

This farmer started at an organic incubator farmer and after buying land of their own, "didn't take certification following that purchase" (F7). The farmer explained that "'beyond organic' is the term that we used to use. Now, we use 'regenerative'" (F7). Their experience at the incubator farm, where other farmers were spraying chemicals that were "on the list" of chemicals that are permitted for organic producers, motivated them to set an example (F7). The farmer explained, "it says on the label that it kills bees . . . I don't care what list it's on, I'm not using that" (F7). Despite being told "'Oh, you'll see. After three years, you'll be using it, too,'" the farmer proudly demonstrates with their farming practices, "we're well more than three years and we've never used anything" (F7). This farmer explains their persistent adherence to their values in the face of resistance from others:

We've been—we've been able to... avoid using any of these... products that we've don't agree with. That are—yeah, they are certified for, and permissible for organic, but they don't meet our standard. We haven't use them, and we've still been able to produce, you know great food for—for people in a way that is completely aligned with our values. And you know, what we've—what I go with usually is that I'm not willing to make compromises. [laughs] So... people call you names when you—when you talk like that, but [laughs] you know. We've been able to do it. So, you know again, if I go back, the idea for us was to show what's possible, and sort of like, be the change. And that's what we—that's what our goal has been. And I think that was we've been doing. We've shown that it's possible to do that (F7).

This farmer is explicit about the moral dimension of farming practices, even those acceptable under organic certification, are not "completely aligned with our values" (F7). We also see the farmer reference the prefigurative nature of their farming practices: "We've shown that it's possible to do that" (F7).

Prefigurative practices are a draw for members:

Whatever like if there's people that we met that we know, that are doing food in a way that we appreciate and like and we, you know. We, their farming practices are things, we want to support, then we like to go that route . . . I try not to buy meat from grocery store and try to buy meat where I feel like, I the way it's been raised (M23)

Prefigurative practices attract members. Additionally, members see themselves as ambassadors of prefigurative practices:

I think anyone that works in climate change or on anything environmental, you feel like you have to be a bit of a spokesperson to the cause. And I think you're kind of expected to lead by example in a lot of ways . . . I do enjoy when I can show other people or tell other people about it and see that these are options (M4).

There is an expectation of shared values, that the farmers are operating prefiguratively in alignment with the beliefs of their members. For example, this member expects that with the financial support from members, the farmers will also buy local:

From an economic point of view I'd rather my money stay in my local economy. So that fits not just with things being produced or grown locally and not travelling and then that environmental footprint. But yeah, you know I know if I buy something from [Name of Farmers]. That she's likely taking that money and buying whatever she needs from someone else local (M3).

Members understand their support for farmers to contribute to food security. Both farmers and members emphasize the importance of prefigurative practices to their CSA participation.



## The Environment

Environmental protection featured heavily in the motivations of both members and farmers. Each farmer (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10) and all members save one (M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M14, M15, M16, M17, M18, M19, M20, M22, M23, M24, M25, M26) discussed the importance of the environment in interviews.

Two key themes emerged relating to environmental stewardship: farming practices and transportation. Member discussion of environmental motives is nuanced and complex. The messaging around the environment is alive and well. While members are not homogenous in their understandings of the “best” way to pursue environmental stewardship (local versus long supply chains, local versus organic, organic certified versus non-certified) they are very cohesive about environmental stewardship being an important motivation for participation in CSA. As this couple explains,

[our] primary motivation of the CSAs, in particular, was to reduce our carbon footprint in terms of procuring our food and the way the food is grown. And that also kind of comes back to the practices that the farmers used. The amount of our carbon-fuelled equipment that they use, some of the practices in terms of how they rotate their fields, what kind of cover crops they use, how much natural fertilizer, how they manage their water, all that kind of stuff also was important to us and part of the reason why we wanted to support smaller CSAs . . . I think what I didn't like about some of the really big farms is some of the means that they have to use in order to be able to support the amount of farm space that they're using. Right down to like, the size of the greenhouses that they have, so they are having to use a lot of electricity to keep all of that stuff running. And we'd get some really crazy fruits and vegetables at weird times of the year which is a nice treat but the trade-off the sort of environmental footprint of that trade-off didn't really resonate with some of the values that we had (M25, M26).

This couple highlights several farming practices they are looking for to further their environmental goals of reducing the carbon footprint for both the procurement and production of food.

Farmers, too, expressed great commitment to environmental stewardship. Farmers led with the philosophy of working in a way: “that is nurturing for me and for the world around us”

(F2):

I think being organic farmers, we were doing it because we all individually, personally are feel very dedicated to trying to have a positive impact on our environment and world and so I think a lot of those things, you will see in our personal lives, as well . . . It's kind of a funny lifestyle in that the professional and the private are very being melded together. Especially where we all, like live together and live on the farm and so sometimes, I think the decisions that we make as organic farmers are also sort of, bleed into our personal lives . . .with organic farming or small-scale farming, there's just a lot of decisions on a daily basis that feel like, it's like easy to see the connection or the environmental impacts of those decisions or the way that they impact our community or our customers. So, it's, I think we were drawn to this kind of work partly because of that (F9).

For both farmers and members, environmental stewardship is a central motivation for CSA participation. Commitment to environmental stewardship spans two themes, farming practices and transportation. Farmers emphasize working with and for the environment, but farmers do not have a consensus on how. Farmers interviewed range in certification from certified organic, non-certified organic, to beyond organic/ecological/regenerative. No conventional farmers were interviewed. Even though all farms have eschewed conventional farming, there is quite a bit of variation in what is acceptable or desirable. As explained by a non-certified regenerative farmer:

We were pretty disappointed actually when we went from being consumers of organics to producers, when we understood the sort of the—the difference of what it is, or.... But I guess we don't need to sort of get into that full discussion. But I just found that there was quite a bit of gap between what consumers think organic is, and what it actually is. And it's not something we're comfortable with, so.... We're much more interested in having a closed-loop system here (F7).

Farmers also reflected on how they can move their environmental goals forward:

something we do want to work on is, you know, looking at the land that we're managing and trying to see how can we improve it. How we can really start going towards kind of more regenerative agriculture instead of extractive—extractivist agriculture. And you know, we're trying to close some of our systems and loops with—on the farm as well. So, you know, with the use of animals or through other means. I

think that's kind of—that's always a goal that everyone in the co-op has been... on board with since the beginning. And we all have a similar understanding of how these natural systems work. But kind of putting—putting, you know, rubber to the pavements, and actually working on those things, that's where the challenge lies. And I think we've got to keep being critical about what our objectives are there and how we can keep working towards meeting them (F6).

Farmers notes that environmental stewardship also involves meeting the demand for environmentally friendly practices from members:

I think that definitely some of the like more environmental goals of like reducing waste and reducing use of plastics and stuff or you know, we did try to do that this year. But it does take some serious strategizing of how to do that. Especially since so much of what we saw at farmers markets and through the CSA is like the bagged greens. And I think there's definitely a demand for lower waste from customers. So, trying to re-evaluate that for next season (F9).

This is an instance in which members are helping to shape how environmental stewardship is practiced. This is comparable to the co-production of discourse around sustainable labour.

However, in this instance, members are moving the discourse. Members explained that farming practices are key to achieving their environmental goals:

from an environmental standpoint, I think we're supporting local organic farmers, who are putting their land to—like, there all kinds of other ecological benefits associated with mixed farming practices, that aren't monocultures, that aren't—you know, they're not using neonic pesticides . . . I'm a big believer in ecological health . . . that's important, that I'm supporting somebody—a farmer in my community who is not using pesticides, and who is doing mixed farming practices, and using proper crop rotation (M22).

Members emphasized that they sought out farming practices that are compatible with their environmental goal of reducing their carbon footprint (M25, M26). Members are “concerned about the soil erosion, the pesticide and insecticide use” (M7). Both members and farmers are clear that how the food is produced matters. While there is not a consensus about what constitutes best practices, attentiveness to how the food is grown is celebrated by all. Members are concerned about how their food is grown and the impact on the environment.

Members are also concerned about where their food is grown and how it gets to them. Eating food grown locally is important because “it’s taking away the footprint associated with the transportation of the food. From whether it’s, you know, been driven up here from Southern Ontario, or from Argentina, or from—or just coming from China” (M22). Transportation is understood by many members to be an unacceptable environmental cost: “Well obviously I’m very much concerned about the environment, and I absolutely detest having to buy a food, that’s grown five hundred thousand kilometers away and then shipped in” (M7). Transportation is understood to negatively impact both the environment and food quality.

[Food] might be transported over, over long distances which really comes at cost, environmentally and as I mentioned, in terms of the quality of the product, the vegetable. And so, from that perspective it’s comforting and rewarding to—to know that all these products are coming from a local business and a local source (M10).

Members are attentive to the farming practices and transportation associated with the food they consume. Farmers, too, place a great deal of importance on farming practices.

## Good Food

Food quality is important to CSA members and farmers. The freshness and quality of the food came up in twenty-one interviews (F10, F2, F3, F9, M1, M2, M4, M7, M10, M12, M13, M14, M16, M17, M18, M20, M21, M23, M24, M25, M26). As this member notes:

honestly, if the food who weren't super delicious, I don't know if I would want to be part of it . . . I'm trying to think if there's any sort of bigger, bigger purpose behind it, other than eating delicious food and that kind of thing. But I'm not sure that there is . . . The main reason, it's because it's just so good (M16).

Farmers are also motivated by good food. One farmer observed that good food might not be familiar to people:

I think that we, as people living in this world, we go to this... this place where we can buy all of our food. And we have forgotten where that food is coming from. And... and what food should really look like. Whether that be refined foods or that bunch of scallions that looks horrible that's sitting on the shelf. And I think that people forget that foods should be fresh. It should be coming from somewhere within a hundred kilometres of you (F10).

Despite this potential lack of familiarity with good food, for members, this farmer noted:

the starting point is the quality. That the people are looking for quality food and then maybe there are some secondary reasons. But the primary reason, generally, is quality freshness . . . I'm thinking about one customer specifically that they're really into, like fresh, really good quality food (F10).

Farmers enjoy being the source of good food: "I love it. You know there is nothing better than growing all this wonderful food, you know I always tell people it's the best food on the planet. And it is. And if it's not, then it's not going to be in their basket" (F3). One farmer explained that they were motivated by offering the good food they enjoyed to others:

we wanted to offer people what we enjoyed here at home. You know, knowing what's in our food, and... having it provided locally, and readily available. Which was definitely one—one factor for us starting the farm was offering people what we—what we already did (F8).

For members, good food is “healthier for you. There's more vitamins and nutrients. It hasn't traveled a long way. It's usually picked the day of or few days before, I just know it's better for my health. It's tasty” (M1). Members made connections between how the food is grown and its taste. As one member noted:

I think it's healthier, like because. Like, because you know the nutrients are probably more bio-available because you're receiving them when they are really fresh. And then the soil is like, you know, complex and healthy soil. The plants themselves are, you know, pesticide-free, and usually coming from a variety of healthy and diverse seed sources. So, I mean, it's certainly healthier, tastier, fresher. It's more vibrant food (M2).

Members also connected how food is grown with its nutritional value:

my personal goals is to eat as well as I can on the budget that I have. So if I have to make a choice, I would rather get a high-quality food and eat less of that, because I believe it nourishes my body more than, you know, some other foods that are not as nutritious anymore. So if you grow vegetables in nothing but insecticide and pesticides and whatnot, you don't get the nutrients anymore. And I would get these organic (M7).

Members were motivated by good food- understood to be fresher, more vibrant, healthier, pesticide and herbicide free, tastier, higher quality, and more nutritious. Members linked the quality of food with farming practices, the time between harvest and consumption, and with the environmental impact of the food production. Farmers relished providing good food to their members.

## Health

Farmers and members, thirty-two of them, explained the relationship between health and CSA participation (F1, F3, F4, F6, F7, F8, F9, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M14, M15, M17, M18, M19, M20, M21, M22, M23, M24, M25, M26). Health is a central goal for both members and farmers. One member noted that: “my health is very important to me, and I really believe that having good food is integral to that. So yeah, it certainly is supporting my health and that's a motivator” (M2). Farmers are also motivated by health. As this farmer explains, good food is the answer to many of our health issues:

Motivation is that I don't see anything else that I would want to wake up to everyday and do. To me it's a solution to global problems, climate problems. You know society and that the food problem and social, mental health; good food seems to be the answer to everything and good agricultural practices. Yeah, all around it just seems to be the best way to fix everything . . . we are what we eat . . . every form of agriculture right now is chemical heavy and we can't wash it off. Doesn't go away, becomes a part of us energetically, and to me food is the reason why society is sick . . . If we ate good food and we surrounded ourselves with family and food preparation, I feel like that would solve a lot of the mental health issues. Because it would bring people back together . . . We would be a lot healthier (F1).

Health is certainly a motivating factor for farmers, but it was not necessarily the initial motivation. The following farmer started with the motivation of saving land from developers. We can see from the following explanation that their motivation is now more health centered:

I am really upset with food system. And I'm really upset with people and their ignorance. And I don't mean that in a . . . an un-nice way. I mean that they don't know what's going out there and they don't know what's good for them. I think people can do better. And I get upset when people accept that they're going to reach certain age and they're going to be sick. And they're going to be on medicine. And they're going to—it's a lifestyle thing. And so, I just started learning more and going to seminars and being around more like-minded people. And our own health improved when I started growing our own food and I see that people are looking—the people that I deliver to are looking for the same thing in life. Good, healthy eating keep themselves fit into later years and not rely on the medical system . . . So that's my main goal, is to get people to eat properly and be healthy (F4).

This farmer (F4) started with one intention (saving the land) but now understands their goals differently with health being a larger motivation. Another farmer found an entry point into the food system via their own health concerns, and now they have expanded their motivations to be inclusive of a broader range of issues:

I guess around when I was turning twenty or so, I was diagnosed with, like, a gluten intolerance and from—with that information, I started really paying a lot more attention to what I was eating. And it kind of advised trying to avoid gluten—foods with gluten. I was eating a lot more from scratch, and at home, and cooking a lot more than I used to. So, that's started my journey into, like, kind of thinking a little bit more about food in general. Where does it come from? What's in it? And all that. So, from there on, I started reading about kind of more macro issues around food. So social, economic, environmental, financial, and was really kind of intrigued. Really curious. And just, like, kind of doing my own self-learning about it. And one day, I kind of stumbled upon a program to go learn how to farm, in Vermont. And it—it kind of was sitting in the back, there, at the back of my mind for over a year. And then finally, there was a time in my life where I could really... jump on that opportunity. Where all the stars aligned. And went to Vermont for six months to learn how to grow organic vegetables. So, after that, I was like—I was hooked on farming (F6).

Health is a motivation for some farmers at the beginning of their journey. For others, as their motivations evolve during participation, health becomes a motivation. We see in the journeys of F4 and F6, that motivations are not homogenous. We also see that while both farmers value health greatly now, they did not arrive at this shared motivation via the same route.

Members wanted to increase the volume of vegetables in their diet, and to eat vegetables closer to the time they were picked, explaining this as being beneficial for both their health and the environment:

My motivation for joining CSA I'd say is... primarily for—to foster the consumption of healthy vegetables and the local vegetables. So, reducing the impact of, you know, of their transport. Also, better quality in terms of you know shorter time frame from harvest to consumption (M10).

I think first and foremost, it was just getting—getting, like, a more—a variety in our vegetable consumption. And making sure that we eat—basically, that we eat more vegetables. I think that was our main impetus for signing up with the CSA (M11).



We see from these members that they are looking to increase the volume and variety of vegetables in their diets. This is a commonly expressed motivation: “I would say like definitely a goal of eating more vegetables and generally eating healthier” (M5). Health is often one motivation amongst others:

Fresh and local vegetables. Just yeah, just knowing where they came from. Knowing that were organic. Knowing that they were picked the very same day that I brought them home. So, I felt as though they were better environmentally. I felt that they were better for my health (M23).

Members also linked the avoidance of pesticides with health:

Beyond that, we were pretty health conscious to begin with . . . I think the health aspect in terms of the organic nature was really also in front. I was excited at the thought of not having so much pesticide in my food (M21).

I think we're always looking to consume more vegetables, more fruits that kind of thing. So yeah! For health reasons in general, I guess. Yeah! I'm not sure if I have anything more to add to that. But ya! Definitely seeking healthy diet was part of motivation for joining the CSA . . . And less pesticides too, I should say (M8).

One member made a more explicit connection between farming practices and negative health impacts. This member experienced cancer and told this story of a conversation she had while staying in “prime farming land”:

And she says, “Oh,” she says, you know. “There’s an awful lot of cancer around here,” she says. “Nobody will—nobody will say it. Nobody at - the big companies won’t admit it,” she says. “But they're always spraying the vegetables. And the planes go over with the crop spray.” And she says, “We all know where all the cancer’s coming from. It’s from those chemicals they’re pouring down on our vegetables.” So, that was just another, “Oh, yeah. I've got to stay away from vegetables that could have toxic chemicals on them” (M19).

Again, of note, with respect to pesticide use, no conventional farmers or members of conventional CSA were interviewed. Members are motivated by health concerns. Members explain the health benefits they receive from vegetable consumption as being related to farming practices. Members also saw a connection between transportation and health. Some members

linked their own transportation to and from the CSA, as well as the food they eat via the CSA, to their health:

Health benefits, definitely. So, beyond the fresh vegetables that I'm—that I'm eating it's getting to the pick-up—so biking over there. Last year, the pick-up was at the farm, so I didn't bike the whole way. I usually rack-and-rolled and biked from there. But I would say those are the biggest. It's just you know that what you're putting into your body ha—has been grown organically, you know where it comes from, it tastes really good. Like, that's another big thing that I find with the vegetables, is that they just taste so delicious. [chuckles] You really can taste the difference with the freshness. So yeah, exercise and good vegetables (M13)

This member explains the health benefits of transportation and eating vegetables “grown organically” (M13).

Members often note that their children influenced their motivations and choices. This member explains that their conversations with their daughter, who had encouraged them to seek out the CSA, also encouraged healthy practices in terms of food and exercise:

Well, I've been—our circle of friends are—were kind of dubious at first. You know, “Well, why don't you just go and buy them at the grocery store?” But... we also hang out with our daughter's friends, who were also—they're miles ahead of us in any of this kind of... agriculture thing. So, yes, we—I mean, we talk about things when we get together. Talk about, you know, recipes, and... just healthy life—healthier lifestyle. Seems to . . . lend itself to being healthier, in different areas. Of exercise, maybe... and just being healthier (M19).

Health is a motivation for many of the CSA members. Many understand the food they eat to have an impact on their health. CSA participation in organic, and beyond organic CSA, provides an opportunity to consume more vegetables that are grown without herbicides, and pesticides, as well as fresher vegetables. This is understood by members and farmers to contribute to good health. Health as a motivator for CSA participation is not static. Some members and farmers were motivated initially by their own health concerns. Others found health motivations to be salient after participation in CSA. The influence of children also contributes to the salience of health concerns for motivating CSA participation.

## Community

Nine of the ten farmers interviewed emphasised the importance of cultivating community and connection. Twenty-four of the twenty-six member interviewees discussed connection, relationships, and community in the context of CSA participation. This farmer discusses how the desire to create community shaped how they operate their CSA:

So, one of the other reasons that this new farm was attractive to us, is that we wanted to... attract more people to come to the farm. So, the idea of producing and delivering our food out... was something that we want to reduce as well. You know, we do all that ourselves . . . I'm not interested in like hiring someone to deliver. I like the contact with the families. And I think it's super important... you know, the educational aspect of it. And also, just the sort of fulfillment on my end. [laughs] You know, it's nice to see people who appreciate new products, and—and have these great discussions, and have—build an actual community. It's—you know probably the—definitely the most rewarding part of what we're doing, and what we like . . . The idea that we're feeding the same group of families every single week. We—we like that a lot. We—we do enjoy doing markets as well, but... again, the idea for us is to bring more people to the farm. I think that along with the—we have these great conversations with people when we see them every week, whether it's the market or a drop-off. But you know, seeing is understanding, and I—we think that people need to see exactly how we're producing the—everyone sees exactly how the food is being produced. Goes a lot longer—further away than—than just having conversations. So... [laughs] the long answer to—to what you're asking me is that what we—what we would like to be doing is... having the opportunity to bring as many people here to the farm as possible, so they can actually see and live an experience of—of what this lifestyle is like. So, it would—our vision for that is like a—sort of, you know, like a CSA model. So, we have a... subscription-based sort of service for weekly... baskets. The more that I can have picked up on the farm, or the closest possible to us, the better. That's our—our sort of vision. And—and what we'd also really like to be doing is offering farm stays here, so that people can actually really immerse themselves for a certain period of time and participate in the activities on the farm as well (F7).

This farmer emphasizes the importance of bringing people to the farm so that there is an opportunity for experiential learning and for human contact. Farmers and members both emphasized community building as something they aspired to or enjoyed as part of their CSA participation experience:

really, building community... with—around the farm is definitely a new goal, and something that we keep working on, and that even this year, we're putting a lot more

effort into improving. So, I think that's going to—that's the goal that's always going to remain, that we're always going to work hard towards meeting that goal (F6).

Among the farmers, some were less established in this area and hoped to do more:

We really liked the idea of the community farm and having a group of set people that we are growing for. With our location specifically, that's really been hard for us to create that community. And we really haven't done that at all. We are looking to move farms, so there may be room for that in the future (F10).

This farmer, below, notes that while they chose CSA to connect, some members sought out more engagement, and others less:

I guess I'm surprised by how many people want to make the drive up here to pick up their syrup, because we also offer delivery for pretty cheap, so—but people do want to come up here. They're looking for that connection . . . I think it's met our goal, which was basically, you know, another way to sell more syrup and make a better connection with our customers. I think it's been successful at that. Yeah. I am surprised, like, when I'm doing deliveries how some people want to have a little conversation at the door, but a lot of people are just like, "Oh, yeah. Thank you." And then . . . and then that's it. They basically just kind of want their syrup, you know? [laughs] (F5).

One farmer, who practices regenerative agriculture and is not certified, saw community building, or cultivating relationships, as an alternative to the certification process:

People are happy that they have amazing foods. And they're happy to participate in what we're doing . . . And they understand it when they see it. And you know—and you know, that's another sort of issue that I have the certification, the label. The idea of labels that . . . keep the place of a relationship, that take the place of confidence in Earth, you know? It's—I don't think that that's the right move, you know. I think people need to truly understand. Not—not understand what a label tells you it means, but really understand what's happening. Because . . . you know, that's—I think that's the direction that agriculture and society [chuckles] needs to be moving in. And I think that we accomplish that, with what we're doing. And I'd love to see that multiplied (F7).

Physically getting to the farm was mentioned by multiple farmers a key part of this community building. Visiting the farm meets multiple motivations mentioned by farmers such as education through experiential learning and connection. One farmer explains members coming to the farm from their perspective:

I think for us, as a farm, it's like really building a community. And like, inviting people to come, you know, spend time on the farm. And to—you know, to see what, you know, a farm looks like even. For some people, or some kids especially, have never had that experience . . . And we have customers that have communicated that to us. Like, "We are your customers because we have this opportunity to bring our kids every week to the farm." And for them, that's extremely important. And for me as a farmer, you know, I recognized that. And as an individual who is really passionate about farming issues, I want to engage with people as much as possible. And I want to with new people as well. And you know, there is—every year, we get new customers that have—are doing the CSA for the first time or visiting the farm for the first time. And we get a really positive feedback from people. And we see—we could see that transition happening right in front of our eyes, week after week . . . And then they fall in love with it . . . in love with the freshness, or the pace. Or you know, they feel at peace when they come to the farm. And they feel relaxed. But the same time they're getting an education, and trying new things as well, which is the always—and that's part of, kind of growing of as person, to try new things (F6).

Farmers note experiential learning for members of all ages, the peace and relaxation of visiting the farm, and the opportunity to connect as key farm visit benefits. Connecting with customers is key for both weekly and yearly CSA farmers. A weekly vegetable and flower CSA farmers shares:

I like the direct contact with the customers and that growing people's food is, it's like you're having this very close involvement in their lives, and I think with CSA, and even with farmers markets, there is a lot of good feedback from people and you know, you can hear about what they served on the weekend or like how, what their kids like to eat and it's just it's nice to be able, it's like very encouraging to be able to get that feedback directly (F9).

For a farmer who runs a meat CSA, this connection is key:

I feel like the CSA does it. Like it kind of is the answer. It's a direct connection. Like I, yeah. Like I would definitely want a CSA over like a food hub. Because it's - I'm on an annual schedule with my customers. So, if I only get to see them once a year. I want to - I definitely want to be the one to be there when they pick up their food (F1).

Members, like farmers, were enthusiastic about the importance of creating community, belonging to this community, and supporting this community. Yet, for members, there were no new relationships with other individuals cultivated during CSA participation. Members did not cultivate relationships with other members online or in-person. However, they did feel connected

to this community of people who are reorganizing their lives: “although we do not have a community that we—that we are part of, I think we're part of a global community, of people who are just... re-organising their lives” (M18). Despite cultivating no new in-person or online relationships, members felt a sense of connection:

just to be part of a group, I think. To feel like, you know, all these other people are doing this. And they—you'd show up at the farm—and we knew that it would happen. You might meet a few people in passing, and just hear other people's stories. And know that we're all in this kind of together with the farmers. And that we—it matters that we're part of that community. It's a better community that we get to kind of... be part of. But also, when our son at school says, “Oh, do you want to play Thursday night?” We would say, “You know—you know, we'd love to. We can't. We have to go pick-up our vegetables at the farm.” And then they'll say, “Oh, what farm?” And then you end up talking to them about that. And then you realize that, yeah, we're part of a community. So it's that community feel too (M20).

The primary relationship that is observable is the relationship cultivated between members and their farmer(s):

it's been really cool to be able to like put a face to who is growing food for you. And it feels good to know that you're supporting somebody who is operating a small business. It's cool to be able to talk to them about the farming. Like [Name of Farm] specially does they put a really good effort into their newsletter and talking about like the organic certification process and which crops are doing well. And what, like educating you on kind of how the whole farming systems works . . . I really, like because they're similar in age to me and my partner like if felt good to be supporting somebody that's like also trying to sort of start a life (M5)

Members linked their support of farms in their community with building community:

I think it builds community. I think it's about supporting your local economy . . . I think like it accomplishes like improving local economies which includes communities, which includes lifestyle of the farm, of the farmers (M1).

We can see that for this member (M1), building community is inclusive of supporting the local economy. They are not the only member who felt this way. Members wanted their community members to live a reasonable life:

But also knowing that the money that we're giving to somebody is somebody in our community, that can then go buy their other groceries with some of the money we've paid. And can, you know, kind of live a reasonable life (M20).

Many members commented on a ripple or knock-on effect of participating pushing them to examine other areas. Some explained that it was not participation per se, but perhaps the values that prompted participation also prompted other practices. Another variation on this effect is explained below. This member described their experience as a synergy of awareness arising from “community and knowing who my farmer is” that pushes them to explore other practices:

I also think that the idea of community and the idea of knowing who my farmer is, is actually has an impact on how I perceive more of my actions which will lead to be more responsible when it comes to environmental stuff (M6).

I asked if it was the relationship that shifted their practices and the member clarified:

I think the awareness. So, knowing, so the idea that, of knowing that food comes from my farmer's farm and that it doesn't come from packaging. Makes me think twice about too much packaging with other things, for example. So, it's just all, I find, all has sort of synergy of awareness (M6).

For members, their primary connection is with their farmer, although members felt connected to those they did not interact with by virtue of their engagement with CSA. Farmers, however, cultivate a larger number of in-person relationships than members do. Both farmers and members emphasized the importance of connection and community. For members, the community they feel connected to involves few in-person or online relationships. For farmers, connection and community consist of more tangible relationships.

## Boycotting

Avoiding certain practices or organizations was mentioned throughout interviews by both farmers and members. In interviews, three of the farmers and twenty of the members outlined that which they sought to avoid through CSA participation (F10, F3, F8, M2, M3, M4, M6, M7, M8, M9, M11, M12, M13, M15, M18, M19, M20, M21, M22, M23, M24, M25, M26). Farmers and members explained that they hoped to avoid grocery stores, large profit-driven systems, farms with unacceptable practices, and products from ‘far away’.

Farmers hoped to help “people get out of the grocery store more and more” (F10). Why the big push to help people out of the grocery store? “The stuff there is what we call old produce, dead, even dead, we call it dead produce, we need produce that’s just fresh and alive. It’s just a world of difference” (F3). Nutritional values were linked with the practices of grocery stores by another member:

So you're getting the maximum amount of natural nutrients in all of the foods that we were receiving versus what you would get from a large-scale grocery store that, the fruits and vegetables maybe never actually ripen and they've been transported from far away and have been grown in all kinds of weird and wonderful conditions to try to fake mother nature into creating stuff that we really shouldn't have at certain times of the year (M25, M26).

Members also sought to avoid the grocery store. One member notes that “at a big box store, the money doesn't stay in our community” (M3). Another said that while the CSA “might be a little bit more expensive than what you can get, you know, at [grocery store]. But... [grocery store] doesn't fill all those other things that... that I am... wanting to achieve” (M12). For another member, the “moral of who are you supporting [matters]. The [name of family that owns a grocery chain] are doing fine. They don't need any more help, right? They're doing perfectly fine” (M15). Members also objected to the practices of these corporations:



You know it can get people out of [grocery store], and I mean, like not to mention like the friggin' abysmal labour practices and stuff and packaging and environmental issues of those major stores which I really don't like supporting you know (M2).

The concerns with labour practices extended to food production systems of imported food as we have no way of auditing the “social issues in the food system” in other countries (M9). This was a common concern:

Wanting to support—like, wanting to kind of contribute to supporting a local food economy, and trying to reduce the... you know, amount of—like, my contribution to, like, shipping food over massive distances. And also, like, questionable labor practices . . . like—but corporate industrial food systems (M24).

Members expressed concerns about the morality of supporting these companies, the practices of these companies, and the practices of the food supply chain that supplies these grocery stores.

This member describes avoiding the grocery store experience:

I think I was super excited at the notion of the organic-ness of it and the avoiding the grocery store experience, that was like foremost in my mind . . . And then just seeing what came off for, came from the garden to us and “Oh, I see. I see.” It's just, it's not a grocery store life (M21).

Members noted the absence of seasonality in the grocery store system (M25, M26). This farmer noted: “Like, why do we have so much in the grocery store that's from Mexico and from Argentina and from the States? Like, you know, right now. End of July. Like, there's no reason” (F8). Members and farmers hoped to get members out of grocery stores to avoid poor quality food, poor labour practices domestically and in international supply chains, lack of seasonality in produce, and the unpleasant experience of grocery store shopping.

Members were also clear about the flaws they have observed in large, profit-driven systems, and their desire to avoid supporting and participating in those systems: “Big systems have taken us only so far in globalization and . . . to be resilient against impacts of achieving climate and continue to thrive . . . we need to kind of zone back in” (M4). These systems are seen

as being environmentally detrimental. These systems are also seen as contributing to the “noise” in one’s life due to their consumption-driven structure:

[In the] consumerist and product-driven and waste-driven kind of system that we operate in, it's easy that you have everything at your fingertips. All the choices in the world and you can have anything that you want at any time. And I guess I was starting to get a little uncomfortable with that and this is just a great option for channeling out some of that noise, if that makes sense (M4).

Members sought to avoid supporting: “some big company that doesn’t have that vested interest in our community” (M12). Members understand that avoiding these systems have financial implications for the members of their community: “my money is going directly to somebody who works directly in that and is cutting out all of the different—the intermediary steps that inflate food prices and mean that the end result, or the person at the end of the line gets less of the profits” (M25, M26). As described by one member, these other food systems are profit driven: “the great big agricultural machine, that really produces food for... you know... food, whose main purpose is to—is to make profit, rather than to... to make people healthy” (M18). This profit motive has implications for the quality of food: “the mega-agriculture of farms that—they don't produce food there” (M7). One member noted that they did not see a role for corporations in their understanding of food sovereignty:

But from a sovereignty point of view, I just don't want to be beholden to corporation, when it comes to where and how I get my food. So as much as we can do ourselves great. But I certainly have no issue relying on the expertise of others or the capacity of others to produce what we can't or don't you know (M3).

Members want to avoid corporations that are not rooted in and supporting their communities.

Members hope to avoid these organizations due to their labour practices, the remuneration they provide farmers and farm workers, the consumerist values they represent and promote, and the environmental impact of these corporations.

Members also sought to avoid unacceptable farms by participating in CSA. Farmers did not mention avoiding other farms, or having their members avoid other farms in the same that members did. However, one farmer described their concerns about these other farms this way:

we are appalled at what our neighbors do to their farms, in order, in order to you know, make a living and they're just making a living based on current technology, and I'm not faulting them, I'm just appalled that they destroyed the world, the environmental world in order to do what they have to do to make a living (F3).

For members, these other kinds of farms feel different: “if there's a large farm that's a big, huge corporate behemoth farm that has a farm box program, that's a different feeling than one where it's cooperative a farm” (M15). Some members described this difference in terms of the environmental impact of monocultures and pesticides:

from an environmental standpoint, I think we're supporting local organic farmers, who are putting their land to—like, there all kinds of other ecological benefits associated with mixed farming practices, that aren't monocultures, that aren't—you know, they're not using neonic pesticides (M22).

Many members noted avoiding produce from other geographic regions. Some members who mentioned avoiding produce from a particular location explained in in terms of transportation: “the distance that the produce is traveling it's probably about as low as it can get. So, it'd be more effective than even buying some things made in Canada” (M8). Members sought to avoid: “truck travel and/or plane travel or however they get the food to the grocery stores” (M12).

There is a great deal of concern among members about: “the footprint associated with the transportation of the food. From whether it's, you know, been driven up here from Southern Ontario, or from Argentina, or from—or just coming from China” (M22). A few members mentioned the ethics of production practices relating to these imported foods, in addition to concerns about transportation. Members did not want to support “the production of food that is not necessarily ethically produced or obtained or foods that are not, that the transportation of

which contributes . . . to pollution” (M6). One member mentioned their concerns about organic standards in addition to transportation:

I know the rules in the United States have changed in terms of what they can and cannot use. So, it used to be truly organic; it no longer is. So, I'm not sure if I would. I will always seek out organic, but I'm not convinced whatever comes from the US is truly organic anymore (M7).

For other members, avoiding imported produce is the corollary to supporting local:

But USA, sorry, right now, I'm not buying it . . . Because we have a lot of talented, hardworking individuals who are trying to make a living... by supplying produce for people. And why should I pay for transport coming from somewhere else and somebody else's economy, when the economy here needs to be boosted. So, if I can do my little part, I—I'll do it (M19).

For many members, lowering your environmental footprint is the motivation behind “Looking for things that are produced in Canada or maybe the States. If not, you know, rather than something has been produced in South America or China or Europe or something like that” (M8). Avoiding shipping is understood to produce “environmental benefits . . . again, the local factor that the vegetables aren't being shipped from, you know, the States or Peru, or down south . . . it's as a close you can get” (M13). Members understand that they are able to meet their sustainability goals by “getting a bulk of your fresh foods from the area . . . versus getting a lettuce from, like, Leamington or from past Toronto or from California, it's a different ball game” (M15).

Members sought to avoid grocery stores, profit-driven systems, certain types of farms, and products that had travelled far. Farmers were concerned about the quality of food in grocery stores, farming practices, and seasonality. Members were vocal about avoiding certain practices through CSA participation.

## Parenting

Parental modeling and education are important motivators for participants with young children in their care. Farmers are aware that this is an important motivation for some of their members. While there were no questions related to children or parenting in the interviews, parent-child relationships and how they influence food practices were described by multiple participants. Sixteen of the member interviewees are parents. Of these interviewees, eight discussed CSA participation as a means for teaching their kids and three of the parents discussed learning from their adult children. Several CSA members note the role of their own parents and grandparents in shaping how they view food and model practices for their own children (M10, M19, M20, M21).

This farmer observed that participants with children “like the idea of supporting local business, they feel like it’s an environmentally responsible thing to do, they want their kids to know a farmer, like, and try and get their kids to eat more vegetables” (F2). Parents understand CSA participation to be a way to model “good practice” for their children:

it's going to be good for us. For the family. In terms of nutrients but also just taste. But then, beyond that, it was really just that the idea of modeling. That, you know, we have to—if we want our kids do keep doing this, then we have to make sure we're doing it. And even if it's hard, find a way. Because... because that way, then it will be part of who they are . . . that idea of showing them the way that this is a good—a good practice (M20).

This parent highlights that while CSA participation can be challenging, they hope to persevere so that the practices associated with CSA become “part of who they are” (M20). Parents saw raising children to practice good environmental stewardship as a balance to the environmental impact of having children:

now as parents, we want to make sure that—okay, we have three kids. Having kids is horrible for the environment, a lot of people say to me. But how can we teach them to

be proper stewards of that environment? How can we teach them that nature grows this to help us and that we don't take too much. So, it's finding that balance (M15).

Participating in a CSA is seen, in part, as an educational adventure:

I think part of the impetus was to use it as a teaching aid for the kids. Because I wanted to... I just wanted to explore that awareness of the food cycle with them. And just their eagerness to be on board with all these was really exciting. So, I think that education was one of the big drives (M21).

Parents are motivated to initiate their children into food procurement practices that they understand to be environmentally beneficial.

### Ethical Meat and Vegetarianism

The motivation to consume meat described as ethical, or abstaining from the consumption of meat, was noted by members that were doing meat CSA, as well as those members who were vegetarian. Six of the members interviewed did meat shares. Some other members described themselves as having greatly reduced their meat consumption (M7, M25, M26), shopping for “happy meat” (M6), aspiring to do a meat share (M5, M17), vegan (M4), or vegetarian (M20, M18, M19, M15). Both vegetarians and those doing meat shares described their choices in terms of the environment and ethics. One member who participated in a meat share noted:

I've been reading a fair bit about industrial farming and how animals are treated and it's pretty awful. And I knew quite a few people who are sort of trying to make a more conscious decision about eating ethically sourced animals that had been treated well. And you know, that saying of only having one bad day. I really like that philosophy and so, so even though I could, you know buy all the meat in the world from the grocery store and I wouldn't necessarily think too hard about it. It's sort of there in the back of my mind and even if I'm still buying stuff in the grocery store. I want to support a farmer that I think is doing a lot of good, for the industry and for the animals and all of that stuff (M16).

For a family that consumes a predominantly plant-based diet, they understand their meat-free motivation to be an ethical and environmental choice:

Well, if I'm going to eat... animal, well I should probably go hunting and do it myself. I couldn't do that because I couldn't even dissections in school. So, I'm like "Okay, if I can't do that," [chuckles] and then if I'm looking at it, like, other ways to kind of help that moral... and ethical treatment of animals, that's one thing. And that thing is... it takes thousands upon thousands upon thousands of litres of water to make, like, one pound of beef. Environmentally, we can't do that. There's a tipping point there (M15).

Another member described their meat-free diet in terms of “empathy”: “There's Snowball. You know what I mean? And I—[chuckles] you know, all of a sudden, that chicken leg doesn't look quite so good, you know. Now that I've met a chicken, and it's got a name and I hold it, [chuckles] you know” (M19). For vegetarians, if family members do not share the same food

goals such as vegetarianism, this can be challenging (M19). The goal of meat abstinence requires explaining what one is doing and why in negotiations with family members as discussed earlier in the section on relationships. For both meat-share members and vegetarians, ethical and environmental themes frame their motivation to eat ethical meat or to abstain from meat consumption.



**Commentary Summary**

How people talk about what they do is key to understanding CSA as well as being a source of textual data and meta commentary. Members and farmers described a wide range of intentions relating to their participation in Community Supported Agriculture. There is a great deal of overlap in intentions between farmers and members, but this is not always the case.

Farmers and members are motivated to participate in CSA by sustainable labour conditions, support for farmers, food security and prefigurative practices, the environment, good food, health, community, boycotting, parenting, and vegetarianism and ethical meat. Creating sustainable labour conditions for farmers was a motivation mentioned by both farmers and members. Supporting farms who were ensuring fair wages and working conditions is important to the members. Farms that had messaging around labour practices had members who mentioned labour practices in their interviews, indicating that while members do play an important role in defining their motivations for participating in CSA, the farms and their messaging are also important in defining the problems and solutions that motivate CSA participation. Members explained that there is a connection between labour conditions on farms and the pressure created by the macroeconomic situation. Members connect shopping local and providing direct financial support for farms with the labour practices at those farms. Members making the connection between support for farms and labour practices correlates with farms discussing labour issues in their social media content. Both farmers and members identify sustainable labour conditions as motivating CSA participation.

Food security motivates members who explain that their support of local farmers contributes the local food economy. This support is explained by members as a means for buttressing food security and prefigurative practices. By sourcing their food locally, members

feel they are underpinning the local food system, thereby contributing to food security.

Prefigurative practices - supporting those who are living their values, living your values as an example to others to show it is possible - features in the motivations of both farmers and members.

Environmental protection featured heavily in the motivations of both members and farmers. Two key themes emerged relating to environmental stewardship: farming practices and transportation. Member discussion of environmental motives is nuanced and complex. The messaging around the environment is alive and well. Farmers emphasize working with and for the environment, but farmers do not have a consensus on how. Attentiveness to how the food is grown is celebrated by both farmers and members. Members are concerned about how their food is grown and the impact on the environment. Members are also concerned about where their food is grown and how it gets to them.

Good food motivates Community Supported Agriculture members. Farmers are also motivated by good food. Members were motivated by good food - understood to be fresher, more vibrant, healthier, pesticide and herbicide free, tastier, higher quality, and more nutritious. Members linked the quality of food with farming practices, the time between harvest and consumption, and with the environmental impact of the food production. Farmers relished providing good food to their members.

Health is a motivation for many of the CSA members. Many understand the food they eat to have an impact on their health. CSA participation in organic, and beyond organic CSA, provides an opportunity to consume more vegetables that are grown without herbicides, and pesticides, as well as fresher vegetables. This is understood by members and farmers to contribute to good health. Health as a motivator for CSA participation is not static. Some

members and farmers were motivated initially by their own health concerns. Others found health motivations to be salient after participation in CSA. The influence of children also contributes to the salience of health concerns for motivating CSA participation.

Community was emphasized by both farmers and members. For members, their primary connection is with their farmer, although members felt connected to those they did not interact with by virtue of their engagement with CSA. Farmers, however, cultivate a larger number of in-person relationships than members do. Both farmers and members emphasized the importance of connection and community. For members, the community they feel connected to involves few in-person or online relationships. Members feel a connection to a community of practice. For farmers, connection and community consist of more tangible relationships.

Avoiding or boycotting certain practices or organizations was mentioned throughout interviews by both farmers and members. Farmers and members explained that they hoped to avoid grocery stores, large profit-driven systems, farms with unacceptable practices, and products from 'far away'. Members were clear about the flaws they have observed in large, profit-driven systems, and their desire to avoid supporting and participating in those systems. Members want to avoid corporations that are not rooted in and supporting their communities. Members hope to avoid these organizations due to their labour practices, the remuneration they provide farmers and farm workers, the consumerist values they represent and promote, and the environmental impact of these corporations.

Parental modeling and education are important motivators for participants with young children in their care. Farmers are aware that this is an important motivation for some of their members. Parents are motivated to initiate their children into food procurement practices that they understand to be environmentally beneficial.

The motivation for the consumption of meat described as ethical, or abstaining from the consumption of meat, was noted by members that were doing meat CSA, as well as those members who were vegetarian. Both vegetarians and those doing meat shares described their choices in terms of the environment and ethics.

## Chapter 6: Evaluation Practice and Material Changes

How do you know if you are on the right path? Farmers and members had a variety of ways in which they check-in or gauge if their efforts are moving them closer to their goals. Have these practices resulted in material changes? How do members evaluate these material changes? One member notes their sense of capacity and the role of mindfulness in checking in with progress:

we see ourselves as capable agents in that, in making decisions that can impact our environment. Not just in ecological kind of greener way. But just our environment. Like having discussions with friends about what's important to us, you know. So, I think that kind of thing, I think it's always been a goal to be very mindful in how we live our lives and I think that CSA is a big part of that, to be honest (M5).

Evaluation was not how the following member described their way of checking in, but they did note an assessment of whether something “concerns” them and their approach for addressing their concern by “look[ing] for a solution”:

I don't know that there's a sort of way that I review or engage with it. I would say generally in life if there's something that doesn't feel right with me, it will... you know it will concern me or I will think about it and look for a solution to it. Otherwise sometimes opportunities present themselves, as I say would happen in this case. I didn't—I wasn't thinking necessarily that I needed more local food or I wasn't thinking that specifically, in this case with the CSA. I just happened to see one and said, “Hey that would be a great way of changing my behaviour and reducing our footprint,” etc., as a family. But I would say... generally measure or gauge whether not to participate in something like this or change my behavior in a different way, just by different—different values that I have, including if it's sustainable and trying to be stewards of a healthy city and a healthy country and a healthy planet (M10).

This member looks for practices that line up with their values and uses their sense of what “feel[s] right” to determine if those practices continue to line up with their values (M10). Not all members evaluate, some are just doing their “best, with, you know, the time available to make good choices” (M14). Another member (M14) uses the time available to assess their choices in advance and then moves on. Other members note this strategy as well: “We do a lot of that kind

of thing [research and evaluation] beforehand and then we tend to just kind of, be happy with our decisions and go forward” (M23). Another explains that they do not evaluate, yet note a knowing:

Well, I just know, you just know. It’s not a, I don’t evaluate it, I guess. I just know that eating this is good for me and therefore it’s positive. So, I don’t think there’s like a major feedback loop with on it. Like I’m not sitting around contemplating if it’s good for me. Like I kind of already know (M2).

Knowing if one is on the right path involves an attentiveness to emotional feedback.

Having described how they know they are moving in the right direction, I observed to one member that there’s “emotional feedback that you’re on the right path”. The member responded: “Oh yes, absolutely. I just know this is the right thing to do” (M19). Members interrogate this emotional feedback, digging into to whether something just feels good and whether their perception is “grounded in reality”:

It's a good question. I'm not. I don't know. Perhaps I need to do a bit more reflecting on it cause I don't know that I. It tends to you know, my husband and I, will have these conversations where it tends to feel like that is, like it’s hitting the mark, like it's a good thing, for these reasons we talked about. Although, yeah, am I basing that on like this feels good? You know is that as grounded in reality? I'd like to think so maybe I'm just going to, maybe it's not, but yeah, we often will just kind of, discuss it (M23)

The combination of research and knowing through feeling is explained by another member:

I'd say large [part of evaluation] would be on the front-end, in my case. And then the bonus, is that I'm introspecting and feeling like warm, fuzzy, good things. But yeah, definitely, I guess, my knowledge of like the agricultural system and its place in climate change and all of those things (M4).

Information, however imperfect, informs the choices of members. As this member reflects:

I also think it’s just, like, where there’s information, I use that information to inform my decision. So, that is, aware of a company that wasn’t a great company, I would avoid them. I can’t think of any of the top of my head. But—well, you know, even the eggs that they sell at the grocery store that I go to—the eggs that they sell there, I’ve heard—I’ve read articles about the farm where the eggs come from, so I buy them. That kind of thing. And yeah, you’re probably right, but... but I think I would if I found—if I knew negative information, I would avoid nefarious companies as well.

It's just, I think, a lack of information sometimes. But I'm not—I'm probably not making perfectly sound decisions all the time (M24).

Members also interrogate their own assumptions in an iterative process as part of larger discussions:

I worked in sort of an environmental-ish kind of area, so that's a part of my pretty regular dialogue anyway. So oftentimes that would be me coming home from work and talking to [Partner's name] about something that came up and it just kind of naturally flowed to the stuff that we're doing in our lives and how does that reflect in our lives and would maybe start a discussion around our CSA and that we're either happy with what we're learning about our CSA or the further we go along and the further we realize—actually the assumptions that we made about the environmental practices of the CSA are not turning out to be true assumptions, or true. So, it's much more a very like ongoing... thing as opposed to we stop and do a check-in. But I'd say at the end of every year when the CSA ends, we probably have a very specific conversation about what do we think about the CSA and would we want to do it next year. And we kind of revisit that again at the beginning of the next CSA season (M25, M26).

Time provides members an opportunity to reflect. For those who have been participating longer and have had a chance to see their goals being met, how they evaluate has changed as well. This member reflects on how their assessment has changed since the early days of doing CSA:

there was a sense of not quite being in control and when we would get to the next share and we, so our consumption of the food was one way that we saw or how are we doing here? Or have we learned anything? Are we still throwing stuff out? Or all that stuff. So now I think it has shifted to a more calm view of all that and you know, I guess that net that you spoke of, is another means of assessing. How, you know, how [are] we doing in the rest of our lives, is also a bench mark I guess, to knowing, are we achieving some of these goals. Some of these goals have been to be healthier in our lifestyle, both through what we're eating. But also, just overall and CSA being part of that and I, and so I would say that we're able to be a bit more, the only way that I can think of is calm. We're a bit more calm about it. All because we can see that things have changed throughout the years and that a lot of these goals are being met. We still have a long way to go. But it's still you know, we're making, we're very vocal about some of the decisions that we make, regarding how we eat, how we choose transportation, how we package our food up and just different things you know (M6)

The shift from frantic to calm seemed to reflect a mastery of a skill set, I asked if that was a fair assessment:

Fair, yeah! That's an interesting way of saying it . . . I'm seeing some of my friends, who've just started let say last year something and they, you know. I have a friend who will take a picture of a kohlrabi and send it to me and go what the heck is this? And what do I do with it? And it's just makes me smile a little bit. But I know the feeling of, Oh My Gosh. Like you know, if I don't use this, it's going to go rotten, and I have no idea what it is and are my kids gonna like it or whatever (M6).

Members employ a variety of techniques to evaluate CSA participation. Ongoing discussions with family, attentiveness to new information, active research, and intuition are some of the ways that members evaluate CSA participation. Next, let's explore how farmers and members evaluate progress towards specific goals.



### Sustainable Labour Conditions

The farms with labour related messaging both noted that they had no “formal” evaluation for labour standards (F6, F9). However, both farms do track metrics. In terms of labour and worker’s rights, payroll, and ratio of full-time to part-time employees, are metrics used by farms to assess how they are doing (F6). Other metrics include daily meetings with workers, bi-weekly co-op meetings, and AGMs but more formal means for evaluation are hoped for (F9). Additionally, while labour satisfaction is not explicitly measured, there are several practices and check-ins in place due to the structure of the cooperative.

We don't have any, like, formal evaluation. So, I think one for the employment and the jobs, I mean, we do have—that’s something we obviously would have data on. So, that—like, you know, in terms of payroll and what we pay ourselves and our goals, and.... And then also, yeah, just trying to offer the longest possible, you know, contract for a full-time employee. Trying to have as many full-time employees versus part-time. So, that's some of the metrics (F6).

Ongoing discussions are a commonly referenced evaluative technique. This process is explained by one of the farmers operating a co-operative:

I think that right now, we don't really have a formal way of evaluating that. Like I think being a co-op, we do have more structure, in terms of like our meetings and checking in and you know we have like probably you know perhaps a sort of meeting every day. But we have like a bi-weekly co-op meeting, where we sort of go around, go through like the bigger picture goals and to do lists and check-in with everyone. We have like our AGM, which is even more broad and, but we don't really have a way at this point of measuring, like job satisfaction or, so that, I think would be a good thing to think about this winter (F9).

Sustainable labour conditions include financial sustainability. Not all farms have achieved financial sustainability. This farmer explains that they continue to work towards this goal but have not gotten there yet:

our initial goals for starting this CSA, I think... you know, happiness in general. You know, the ideal of what we would like to spend our time doing, definitely yes. As far as financially, meeting our financial goals, no. But we're very lucky in that we have, you know, the off-farm income which supports the farm. And we're still looking for

that sweet spot . . . So, we've been really lucky that way with the little bit more freedom... that we don't have to rely on the financial side. But it's definitely still a goal, for us. So, we're not meeting that one yet. But it's on the list (F8).

Other farmers have met their goals in terms of financial sustainability: “I think it's met our goal, which was basically, you know, another way to sell more syrup and make a better connection with our customers. I think it's been successful at that” (F5). Farmers have several techniques for evaluating labour and financial sustainability.

For members, despite mentioning labour conditions as a goal (M20, M13, M24, M25, M26, M6, M7, M9), evaluative metrics were limited.

So, I mean, I think—I guess that's something, like, I've learned about the CSA about, through their social media. Like, you're probably right, that is—that might've been something that I didn't necessarily think a—well, no. That's not true. I do—I do care about, like, places I get my food. And like, the practices for the—you know, of the workers who created the food. I think that information's really hard to find a lot of the time. So, just for the sake of expediency, you have to buy your groceries. So, you buy your groceries. And you know, like, you know, Bob's Red Mill. They do a great job of... talking about the corporate culture and how their workers are treated. Not necessarily something I seek out or spend a huge amount of time looking for information on. So, I guess it was more of like—that was like, an added benefit and perk, was that I felt like these farmers who are working on the CSA were all very engaged and had a voice in the future of, like, their CSA. They were able to kind of determine how things work to their CSA and that type of thing. And that mattered to me. I don't know, how do I check in on that though? I don't know (M24).

Despite farmers noting that they do not have a formal means for evaluating labour practices on their farms, there are several strategies in place. Ongoing discussions, payroll records, regular meetings, and checking if the farm has turned a profit are all ways that farmers check to see if they are making progress towards sustainable labour conditions. Despite being noted by members as a goal for their CSA participation, evaluative metrics for sustainable labour conditions are not well developed by members.

**Support for Farmers: Food Security and Prefigurative Practice**

Members understood their support of local farmers, by eating locally and participating in CSA, to be contributing to food security by ensuring that local farmers have a sustainable income so they can remain in business and maintain local food infrastructure. Members described the importance of supporting farmers (M1, M12, M22, M3, M24, M5, M23, M9, M2, M11, M7, M18, M14, M15, M17), the role of prefigurative practices (M23, M4), and the importance of specific farming practices in interviews (M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M13, M14, M15, M16, M17, M19, M20, M22, M23, M24, M25, M26). Eating locally is evaluated by inclusions (local goods or services) compared to exclusions (non-local goods or services), intuition, and emotional feedback. Getting their food locally is important for many members and checking-in with their progress on eating locally is a mix of observation and intuition.

A shift in shopping practices is one metric. What is the split between grocery store shopping, CSA, local farmers' market, or other local options? Has the grocery store shopping been reduced in favour of the latter options? (M11). Are they avoiding "box stores" and "big grocery stores"? Are they avoiding things that could "come from anywhere"? Are they shopping in person? Are the farmers' markets selling all local? (M19). Sometimes, success in shopping locally is measured by the simple metric of whether all the vegetables have been finished (M13). For others, while eating local remains a goal, they are "not that dogmatic" about evaluating progress on eating locally but note the longevity of the vegetables from the CSA compared to the supermarket vegetables (M14). For others, the employment of people locally on the farm is a metric, which was also mentioned as a metric for evaluating environmental goals (M19). There is also emotional feedback about supporting someone you know:

And they've made it so easy. And they put out such nice newsletters with very family friendly tips and recipes, and—it just—it just makes me really happy to be part of this.

It's just feels like the right thing to do and, like, why didn't I do it sooner? Like.... I just know this is the right thing to do. This is supporting somebody that I know. You know, it's—and even if I didn't know him, there's other farmers in this community that are like him, that I could support, if he didn't do it, anymore (M19).

Members sought wider engagement for both CSA and other local food procurement options. In evaluating this, members talked about accessibility and visibility. Accessibility is understood to have both geographic and financial dimensions. Members look at how accessible food is to people and how accessible farmers' markets are to people when checking in with local food metrics (M1). One concrete metric is that the farm contributes to the Ottawa Food Bank and has shares for “people who can't afford” it themselves (M19). In terms of visibility, members looked at local food options beyond CSA, asking: Are there direct sales from farmers to restaurants? Are there direct sales from farmers to customers? Are people are growing food on roof tops? Are people are learning how to grow their own food? Are food practices visible in the community? (M1).

The evaluative metrics for local food consumption are simple on the surface – the percentage of where food is sourced or how sourcing food changes. Members also tie financial support for farmers to food security. For members, financial support and supporting local is also tied to labour practices. Maintaining food security encompasses supporting early career or young farmers, ensuring they have sufficient financial resources to stay in agriculture in this location, and maintaining the ability to grow food locally. The support of local food systems is seen as a counter to large agricultural operations or large corporations which are understood to not share the same motivations as local farmers. For members, sourcing their food locally is understood to be linked to the support of farmers, farms, labour practices, food security, and a particular type of food system (an alternative to large agriculture and large corporations).

## Environment

Farmers explained how they evaluate making progress towards their environmental goals with observable metrics. Each farmer (F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8, F9, F10) discussed the importance of the environment in interviews. The diversity and quantity of wildlife on farm (F3) was a common response. Farms often post about the changes they observe in their stewardship:

In this field that was overrun by sedge grasses and buttercups when we started farming it in 2016, the grasses and clovers are slowly taking over. Very encouraging to see. . . #RegenerativeAgriculture #Outaouais #FamilyFarm #PastureBased #SedgeGrass #clover #LandStewardship #MobGrazing #SoilHealth #biodiversity #RotationalGrazing (Grazingdays, n.d.) [ID: Picture of a field, cattle in the distance, with clover visible in the foreground.]

It sure is heartwarming to see the biodiversity increasing on the farm. This is the 2nd turtle we've seen in as many days! . C'est tellement fascinant de voir la biodiversité accroître à la ferme. Voici la deuxième tortue qu'on voit cette semaine (aussi grosses que nos têtes!). #biodiversity #turtles #FarmLife #FamilyFarm #PastureBased #GrassFed #GrassFinished #CowCalf #SoilHealth #SupportLocal (Grazingdays, n.d.) [ID: A turtle in a field.]

There were also metrics that are harder to measure with the naked eye such as water quality and the absence of chemicals used (F3 & F1). Many of the farmers talked about changes over time, such as improvement in land health, increased diversity of forages and grasses, increased diversity of bird life, increased diversity of wildlife, reduced bare soil, reduced erosion, quicker snow melt in spring (F1). Of note, that these metrics are seen to be important to both farmers and members:

the wildlife is just phenomenal . . . we have the purest water you can imagine on the farm from drilled wells. So, all of these things are huge concerns to us. We would never spread round up. You know that's just abhorrent to our way of farming. And that's what CSA customers typically want. There are conventional farmers that have moved into CSAs. But I think the majority of the CSA customers are interested in organic products (F3).

The absence of health problems for the herd was also observed:

So, I guess I will start with environmental goals. Like how do I -- I see my land constantly getting better every year. I don't have health problems with my animals because of the way that I rotate them through the farm in a quick way. That they're always getting the best grasses. Which keeps them at peak health (F1).

Some farmers appreciated feedback from a previous steward of the land who noted improved fertility and plant health, especially for trees and perennials (F7). There were also quantifiable metrics such as what goes in and what comes out, vegetable production, soil testing, amendments, and the metrics for organic certification (F6). Of note is the time required for evaluative metrics:

basic level of data that we're keeping track of for our organic certification . . . that's pretty kind of consuming to begin with . . . we talked about, like, maybe doing kind of energy audits, and kind of looking how much energy we use, and that kind of stuff as well. But we're also—we're very, like, cognisant that we—that there's only limited resources. So, we can't—those are all nice ideas, but those are things that happen once you take care of, like, the more fundamental aspects of running the farm. So, we're not in a—in the direction of doing those (F6).

For some, the quantifiable metrics associated with organic certification were buttressed by regular discussion of decision making demanded by the co-op structure (F9):

I guess that's the main more like concrete metric. Because we do go through, like an inspection and we have to go through all of the, like record keeping and application for that yeah. So, it is kind of a useful concrete metric. I guess that outside of that metric is really just in the form of the four of us like discussing our decision making and trying to come back to that central value and make sure that it's still guiding us (F9).

The ways farmers gauge whether progress is being made towards environmental goals are diverse. Some evaluative metrics are on shorter timelines, some require measurement and are quantifiable, others require the knowledge of stewards that came before, and some require longer timelines and accumulated knowledge.

For the members, the metrics for evaluating progress were equally diverse. All members save one (M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M14, M15, M16,

M17, M18, M19, M20, M22, M23, M24, M25, M26) discussed the importance of the environment in interviews. Many front-loaded their evaluations in the sense that they do research up front on what the best option is and then ‘pay your money and take your chances’ for the season. There are some check-ins with themselves or the people they share the food with over the course of the season and perhaps a more formalized discussion with partners at the end of the year. With a front-loaded evaluation, members are “just doing my best, with, you know, the time available to make good choices” – rather than after the fact (M14). For many members, these evaluations are rooted in values. Members are “trying to be stewards of a healthy city and a healthy country and a healthy planet” and “if there’s something that doesn’t feel right with me, it will... you know it will concern me or I will think about it and look for a solution to it” but not necessarily a review (M10).

In the same way that farmers had concrete, quantifiable, and visible metrics for progress, so too did members. Garbage and recycle bin outputs (M12) are used to see if progress is being made on environmental goals. Food waste is another metric:

I think probably the simplest one is... is if... too much of the food is being wasted. That's probably the biggest thing. And I—it took us a couple of years to sort of figure things out, with certain crops, especially. But that's the only time I start to—I don't question the value of the CSA. But I question whether or not I'm fully realizing its potential, if there's, you know, a couple of bags of greens that I end up throwing in the compost after a couple of weeks. So, that's the only time that I worry about it (M22).

One member linked waste outputs with the practices on the farm: the farm employs natural and environmentally friendly farming practices and doesn't “use unnecessary packaging in [their] distribution” (M19). The evaluation of permaculture practices and biodiversity outcomes is rooted in trust that one knows the farmer is doing the best they can (M2). Another quantifiable metric that takes in the broader environmental impact is an online footprint calculator (M9). The idea of a carbon footprint was echoed by others who looked at how far they travelled to get their

food, how they travelled (by bike, car, canoe, foot, bus), and how far their food travelled (M15). Environmental goals for CSA are often evaluated simultaneously with broader environmental goals: Are we consuming less? Are friends and colleagues talking about local, organic food more? Can we sense a societal shift? (M3). There are two dimensions here: what the individuals are doing in their own life, but also what is happening on the farm they support, as well as the member's sense of what shifts are happening in society at large. We also see that there is a mix of quantifiable changes such as carbon footprint or garbage output mixed with more abstract ideas about a change in discourse. Many of these metrics center the idea of a shift, from more to less garbage, from fewer to greater discussions of the environment.

In evaluating their own progress, the metric of a shift or change is more central than the thing that changes. Is CSA making me change my behaviour or ideas? The same change that was mentioned by the farmers in evaluating relationships also comes up in the member evaluation of their own progress. Has the CSA pushed me to examine other practices like where I source fish (M13)? CSA is also evaluated for the knock-on effect it has with an "exploratory" approach:

if I have my farm share and I see that like you can get a certain vegetable without plastic and I'll make an effort to look for it the next time without plastic or I'll 'Oh, I wonder what else that I can buy that's organic' (M5).

Evaluation of environmental goals by members is a mix of concrete metrics, the extent to which change has occurred, and knowledge acquisition. This evaluative bundle is broad and encompasses reflecting on oneself and the CSA in terms of "how we eat, how we choose transportation, how we package our food up . . . have we learned anything?" (M6). This evaluation of change is tempered with caution about its reach but there is still an expectation of impact and changing the minds of others:

I mean what I do is a drop in a bucket and—but it's still a drop. That's all I can do. I can't change the world. I can only change what I do and share what I do with other



people and if they want to follow that, that's fine and if not, that—you know? Yeah . . . So, I belong to a group in [neighbourhood in the Ottawa valley] and we raise funds. And our group, that's our sole purpose is raising funds. So, we hold events, and I'm instrumental in getting our events green. No more single use plastic, no more throwaway stuff, all this kind of stuff. So, they were all on board, so that was my big thing, to change that around. And we have to take care of the environment because what we do here affects [fundraising target geographic region], affects every other nation. That was my project and I'm very happy to report that everybody's online, onboard with that (M7).

Evaluating progress on environmental goals involves a mix of concrete metrics (farming practice on farm the member supports, garbage output) with more abstract metrics such as a shift in discourse or ideas or knowledge. These metrics are anchored by a dynamism – there is an expectation of change.

## Good Food

Freshness, quality, taste are obvious metrics that are used to evaluate CSA participation. Food quality was noted as being important in twenty-one interviews (F10, F2, F3, F9, M1, M2, M4, M7, M10, M12, M13, M14, M16, M17, M18, M20, M21, M23, M24, M25, M26). What is interesting is that members link freshness, quality, and taste with other motivations: Did it taste like we expected it to taste? If it did not, what can we learn about this new item (green bacon)? What can we learn about how to prepare it? (M16). It does matter that the green bacon is tasty, but it also matters that it contributes to increased knowledge and new cooking skills. There is also a financial element to the evaluation of food quality. Members ask themselves: Do I feel like I am getting value for money? Is the cost comparable to the Farmers' Market? Am I enjoying the taste? Is it fresh, vibrant, and lovely? (M2). These evaluative dimensions of the actual food provided by CSA may perhaps seem obvious.

However, good food is more than just fresh and tasty. There is a link between evaluating the social goals with the quality of the food (M2). The quality of the food matters, but the freshness, tastiness, and quality are linked to educational goals, culinary goals, and social goals, including shopping local. As one member observed:

for the last however—five years or so—have really tried to just get as high a concentration of local produce as we can. Like, I said because of social-political reasons, but also, just because... you know, like, they kind of taste better. [chuckles] And that's—you know, it tastes—the tomato from [Name of Farmer] or [Name of Farmer's Market] there tastes a lot better than, you know, the one that was picked early from Mexico and shipped across America (M11).

Members noted the longevity of the produce, one example is two-week-old parsley:

for some reason I didn't get to it right away—oh, I know what it was! It was parsley. And two weeks later, parsley looked like it had just been picked! And, you know, I bought parsley in the grocery store. And if you don't get it in the first four or five days, it looks pretty awful. And I thought, "Wow, that's...." Some vegetables are bigger difference than others. But yeah . . . I know I'm getting something very fresh (M14).

Members are attentive to quality, quantity, and usability of the vegetables:

Definitely, I feel the quality is there. I feel that they—the amount that's provided is fair. And I feel like we're using the product up, you know. I was—I was sort of wondering when I got the first few, and there were unfamiliar things, whether, you know—was this just going to be something where I cook something, and nobody wants to eat it? But it hasn't turned out to be that way (M17).

Members evaluate the quality of the food they receive based on taste, longevity, volume, and usability which could also be understood as familiarity. Despite the perceived connection between the social goals and the quality of the food, members use concrete metrics to evaluate the quality of the produce.

## Health

Evaluating progress towards health goals is challenging for both farmers and members.

Thirty-two farmers and members identified health as being a component of their CSA participation (F1, F3, F4, F6, F7, F8, F9, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M14, M15, M17, M18, M19, M20, M21, M22, M23, M24, M25, M26).

Assessing health outcomes is difficult. Farmers express a reluctance to speak to the issue.

One farmer explained not having an evaluative method for health saying: “I don't think that there is any way for us as, like non-scientific people to have a real, fact-based response” (F10).

Customers seek the CSA out with the intent of becoming healthier and then tell the farmer how they are feeling in terms of their health:

There are people who signed up with me to become healthy. And they only eat what I bring them. And the more I bring them, the happier they are. They hug me when I arrive . . . And they signed up with me knowing they would become healthier... when they... started eating the food that I am growing. So that says something to me right there (F4).

Despite this feedback, farmers were reluctant to speak to evaluating health outcomes: “In terms of the objectives, the health objectives, I learned a long time ago, I'm not a physician, I'm not a scientist, I'm a farmer. So, I never really, I'm very reluctant to ever talk about the health attributes of anything that we grow” (F3).

For CSA members, health is also hard to measure. Some conflated health with certain practices. For example, what does my work lunch look like? Amazing lunches “full of a whole bunch of whole foods” are indicative of healthy consumption of food (M15). Quantifiable goals do feature in evaluating health such as trying to eat vegetables with every meal which is easier to meet during CSA season and “I don't have to think about it” (M5). Another quantifiable metric: “Half your plate should be vegetables” (M8). For others, clean plates are a metric. One member

noted that they do not evaluate health as a family but everyone “everybody seems to kind of want to gather around and see what we got this week” and for the person doing the food procurement and cooking, they evaluate health with whether it got eaten (M17). In terms of quantifiable metrics, practices are seen as indicators of health. Other members noted the challenges with evaluating health outcomes due to their baseline health.

However, members felt reluctant to evaluate the health impacts of CSA participation if they had health issues and were equally reluctant if they did not have health issues. One member noted: “That is very difficult to assess because I can only look at my body and see well, you know I’m as healthy as I can be with all this that I have had over the last three years” (M7).

Another member had a similar observation:

For health, I’ve a got few other things going on. So, it is a little bit difficult to tell on that. I was.... Like I said, my stomach was feeling better for I, you know, kind of fell off the wagon this past week. But.... It—there’s nothing really concrete that I can really say in that regard that—whether my goals are being met or not (M12).

On the other end of the spectrum, evaluating health impacts is challenging for individuals who have not experienced any health issues, so it is hard to determine impact: “It’s hard to tell. I didn’t have any health problems before, I believe. So... I keep—it’s hard to tell if you really has an impact or not . . . How do I know?” (M9). This same hesitancy to speak to health outcomes in the absence poor health was mentioned by another member:

We’re doing okay. Well, so yeah. You know it’s actually interesting too. I mean, we’re generally quite healthy. So, we haven’t, I haven’t had the, I haven’t had the experienced where of having poor health that was then changed or health that then was poor. So, it’s kind of, it seems like part of that over all healthy lifestyle. But you know, cause and effect I haven’t actually, yeah. We feel good when we eat those things. But we feel good a lot of the time, just because a lot of our health choices (M23).

In the space between not being able to speak to health impacts or not being able to measure health impacts, there are members who are using their intuition and self-reflection to anchor their

evaluation. Health is evaluated “all the time” by checking in with their emotional and mental state (M18). There are some more concrete metrics mixed in with this intuitive evaluation: How do they feel? How are their energy levels? Do they feel healthier? Are they losing a “little bits of weight” incrementally? (M19). This intuitive, reflective approach was mentioned throughout interviews:

I feel like my general well-being is so much better when I'm eating a lot of vegetables and I'm eating healthfully. I don't know, yeah. Like, I am pretty—I'm trying to be pretty in touch with my—how I'm feeling physically. And mentally. And I just—I don't know. I'm pretty reflective of that type of thing. But those are, I guess, the types of things I would check it on. Like, am I feeling energetic? Am I feeling, like, heavy? Not so much like, weight-wise. But just, like... you know. This feeling you feel when you eat really well, versus the feeling you feel when you're eating, like, fast food. And that type of thing (M24).

Much of the evaluation of health outcomes is based on intuition and a mix of conflating practices with health:

Well, I just know, you just know. It's not a, I don't evaluate it, I guess. I just know that eating this is good for me and therefore it's positive. So, I don't think there's like a major feedback loop with on it. Like I'm not sitting around contemplating if it's good for me. Like I kind of already know (M2).

Evaluating whether one is reaching one's health goals seems to be less about reaching quantifiable metrics and more about reflection and intuition.

## Community

Community was identified as being central to CSA participation for nine of the ten farmers interviewed and twenty-four of the twenty-six members. How do farmers and members gauge whether they are making progress towards their community building goals? Community and community integration is measured by a mix of “hard metrics . . . in terms of gross sales, or CSA customer amounts or whatever” (F2), feedback, and feelings of integration. Donations to food banks are one of the hard metrics:

we do keep track of, like—on the social side, there's still the amount of, like, food that gets donated to our food bank partner which is [Name of Foodbank]. So, that comes—both sides, of like, either the farm just donating whatever is extra, but also our customers if they can't pick-up their baskets. You know, if they forget, usually then they get donated. So, we keep track of all that as well, in terms of like a little bit of social impact that we can have (F6).

Members are also attentive to the contributions made by farmers: “he contributes—I believe there's CSAs in the city here that go out to people who can't afford. A lot of them, he participates in that. He donates a portion of his produce to the [Name of Foodbank]” (M19). For members, a sense of attachment to place, is an evaluative metric for gauging community integration:

the first thing is that, you know, that feeling of place attachment or sense of place is hard to put in a word and you know, numerical quantify for example. But I think, yeah, you feel like it's a bit more integrated into your community so hard to measure that, that feeling. And I do feel increased attachment to Ottawa. Not saying that it's purely because of the CSA but things such as that, I think, are really important to increasing sense of place (M4).

For farmers, feedback helps them check-in with how integrated they are into their community:

I think it comes from customer feedback and return customers. There are handful of people that have been in our CSA since the first year. And to me that means that we're doing something that they're really happy with. And that they—maybe it's not true, but maybe they really are kind of part our farm family. And it's.... I think that's the biggest way. And I think a handful of customers that really get it, can make all the difference (F10).

Farmers and members gauge their progress towards community building and integration by monitoring metrics like donations, feedback from customers, and reflecting on feelings of integration.



**Accessibility: Cost and Transportation**

While not mentioned as an intention for CSA participation, members did evaluate their CSA experience based on accessibility, noting cost and transportation as key points (M1, M2, M4, M5, M7, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, M13, M14, M15, M16, M20, M21, M22, M23, M24)

Accessibility is a challenge for CSA in terms of geography and finances. Members noted the importance of transportation throughout the interviews. Members did not describe pick-up location as an evaluative metric, however, they did describe it as an exit reason or an obstacle to participation, as well as a factor in choosing a CSA. Financial accessibility is also an evaluative metric.

The pick-up location is a key metric used to evaluate choosing a CSA. Picking up the CSA on the way home from work is a key search criterion when looking for a new CSA (M22). When asked how they came to join the CSA, the “convenient pick-up location” is often the first thing mentioned (M9). Pick-up location was the exit reason for a few members:

I heard about them and saw that they were delivering super close to my house and I thought ‘That’s the one for me!’ . . . [CSA switched to delivery for a year and then to a new location] So I did it for the year that they had the home delivery and then when they choose the new location, I thought ‘Oh no, I’m not going to be able to make that work’ (M16).

Convenient pick-up locations range from “a few hundred meters from my house” (M1) to on the same road as work (M10). One member just looked for the farm closest to them (M8). A close pick-up point can often seal the deal, as these two members explain:

I guess it was advertised at my work, and the pick-up point is right near my work. And I live not too far away. So, it just kind of seemed like a perfect storm, so I . . . signed up . . . Yeah, I did look at a . . . a few others that I had heard of in the past, or . . . that other friends had used, for example. So, I just—yeah, I just quickly compared, based—strictly based on price. Just assuming that they would all have . . . more or less the same options. And I don’t remember if [Farm Name] was the cheapest one, or whatever. But it seemed, like, fairly on par with the rest anyways. Just conveniently located. So I went with that (M11).

And I looked it up and I was kind of shopping around online to see what other CSA shares were available. And I think mostly what it came down to was the pick-up availability. In terms of what day, the pick-up was and how close it was to me. I considered a couple other ones that has options for that included eggs. But I decided that the location of the pick-up kind of outweighed that opportunity in terms of convenience . . . I would say that would maybe be the one things that would makes me change farms if they drastically changed the pick-up location to someplace that was very inconvenient or a time that was inconvenient for me (M5).

For some, a poor pick-up location and the transportation time involved is the only “grumble about this whole procedure, is just the time that it takes to get there and then to get home from it” (M12). One member expressed their frustration with the pick-up location through an end of year survey and was pleased to see that the farm listened by changing the location the next year (M13). If time and money were limitless, some would have their CSA delivered (M14). Delivery was mentioned as a preference in terms of accessibility for those who do not have cars (M2). Finding a pick-up location close to home is another option for those without cars:

Also, I don't have a car. And in Ottawa, you really need to have a car to get to a lot of places. So... then, I was just, like, having a chat with a friend at work one day. And she mentioned that her friends were starting this—that the pick-up was, like, really close to my house. So, that was a—that was probably the biggest factor (M24).

Workplace pick-ups had a similar appeal:

that was the beauty of this arrangement was that it was delivered to my desk . . . It was sort of a novelty that was handed to me, us. And because if its convenience made it an option. But if I'd had to have worked much harder at obtaining the boxes, I'm not certain that I would have participated (M21).

For members, pick-up locations are important. Pick-up locations that do not require the use of car to get to are preferred, specifically closer to home so biking or bussing is possible (M12). Getting to the pick-up during rush hour which also coincides with having to prepare supper and pick children up from school is challenging (M20). Throughout the interviews, transportation was regularly explained as being important to members. Many linked the transportation duration

to environmental outcomes (either transportation of produce or transportation to pick up their produce). Transportation featured heavily in evaluating CSA as an option for food procurement.

Financial accessibility is challenging for farmers and members. For farmers, the challenge is getting people to self-select for accessibility programs with reduced prices (F10). For the members, from a financial perspective, lump sum outlays were also an issue (M21). The food choices made by some members, including but not limited to CSA, are less convenient and are a little more expensive (M13). CSA “ties you down” due to the pick-up, can be more expensive, and sometimes the vegetables do not match your preferences (M14). Cost and time are the two primary challenges (M23). Finances are challenging for food procurement:

It is extremely challenging to do that when you aren't a person of means . . . But our food budget is humongous, and we don't go out. But if you want to eat in a way that is, like, quote unquote better for the world, it costs a fortune (M15).

As observed by one member, “it’s expensive and I’m retired” (M7). The financial cost is a challenge for wider participation in CSA (M4).

While members did not describe pick-up locations in evaluative terms, they did cite pick-up location as an exit reason. Financial accessibility is also a challenge for CSA.

## Change

Both members and farmers discussed the importance of change. Farmers and members noted shifts throughout CSA participation (F1, F4, F7, F8, F9, M1, M2, M3, M4, M5, M6, M13, M17, M18, M19, M22, M25, M26). These changes included change in work-life and business practices (F4), changes due to ongoing evaluation (F9), changing habits to create system change (M1), changes in awareness (M22), changes in diet to include more fresh, raw food (M25, M26, M5) or more vegetables (M6), changes in shopping practices (M4). Many of these changes take time (M20).

Change in understandings, change in practices, and change in knowledge were all celebrated. Farmers observed that when customers are doing new things or learning new things, that the newness hints at a relationship that is generating change. The sense that there is an increased connection with people and increased awareness of food (F1) hints at that relationship. When customers indicate that they are “making changes or learning things that they... didn't know before” (F7) also hints at that relationship. One farmer observed that much of this change happens for members:

But most of the changes happen on their side. That is to say that their food—their eating habits change. And they—they cook more. They use—they eat things that they hadn't eaten before. And they discover products. There's a phenomenon in our society where we're like a consumer society, and we think that... we have the rights to everything, you know? [laughs] You know, that we should have whatever we want, whatever we want it because we're going to pay for it. And... that's like—you know, that's—and we should have this—so you can call that, like, ‘convenience’, let's say, right? [chuckles] And you know... our—the CSA model is—is not convenient. [laughs] Like, it's not the most convenient, you know? But the thing is that people learn that... maybe convenience shouldn't be their first priority. And—and then they realize how much better it is when you don't think like that. So, it's eating seasonally, and understanding [chuckles] what seasonality even is, you know? (F7).

Members also observed that the changes they were making impacted those in their family circle:

It's changed even—we have a Friday evening ritual, when we go to [Name of Husband]'s sister's and her husband's for dinner. He's—he should have been a chef. Anyways, he cooks for us. And traditionally, he's always served us very fatty kind of things. And... heavy on the beef and chickens, and non-so much in the vegetables. Well, he's observed what we've been doing. And he has slowly come around. And now, everything he serves us is healthy vegetables, or something—a plant-based alternative to his filet mignon, or something. And he just loves to kind of brag about the new recipes he's finding that we can eat (M19).

Both farmers and members observed a sense of momentum in the changes people were experiencing:

Where they wouldn't have even considered—you know, they would just go to the grocery store and grab whatever they need. And whether they're customers of us, or not—or friends of ours or not. You know, I just see that it's a lot more people—people that never would have thought about it before, over the last five years. And—and then that's—you know, they're moving to—that's all they buy, is just from farmers (F8).

This sense of momentum is explained as having a synergizing influence as explained by this member:

But you know, it's brought us into a realm where—on a weekly basis, even though in the city, we're landing up at a farm, and the beauty of the farm. And it really—really puts us in nature in a way perhaps we aren't always. And so, in that way, it's kind of made me stop and think, and—and also just being surrounded by the people that are there, who are espousing certain ways of being. And... I mean, it's.... So, it could be having some influence that way. But I think just... in the overall... life, right now, there's a—you know, a momentum building... with people, in terms of their awareness of the things that we're doing that are having an impact on climate, and whatnot (M17).

This sense of synergy is echoed by another member:

I think that the conversations around CSA and the mindset around it has made it such that we have considered other things in our lives as being increasingly important. For example, we drive an electric car, and we have, I guess got it four years ago or something like this four or five years ago. Is it because we have a CSA, no. But I would say that finding a footing in the mindset that supports what our reasoning behind CSA or behind our supporting agriculture in that way. You know, knowing that that has found a purchase in our lives, encourages us to push ourselves in other areas, for sure (M6).

Of note in the above observation is that the member is explicit that change is not solely linked to CSA involvement. This member was not the only one who made this observation. Change is not solely attributable to CSA participation. Indeed, members observed that change often preceded CSA participation as observed by this member:

Like, I said—maybe—again, probably for the last at least five—maybe even ten years, we were philosophically changing. And so—but with the—with the CSA—and even before that, we’ve become.... Yeah, I compost everything, I recycle everything. I'm really careful about all of that. Yeah. And my wife started taking the train to work, rather—because I always driven her—the—I’ve always driven her both ways, for all of lives. And so we’re cutting back a lot on our driving. Yes, so the carbon footprint is really, really big and really important to us now (M18).

The following member explained how they thought some of this change might come about:

I can see that, as people embrace that option, it can certainly change things with respect to, you know, not just how they shop and how they spend their money and - But how they spend their time and how they socialize and things like that. Especially with ones that are connected to the things like the local market or if they have a central kind of hub or drop off point, that tends to just foster connection you know (M3).

Another member observed change in the strength of their commitment:

I feel like my commitment to the farmers has grown because through this experience I've learned how unbelievably difficult it is for businesses to survive - these organic, small organic farms. And like how these little farmers are making and how, you know, it's seeing "expensive" food, but they are still barely getting by. It makes me really aware of the unhealthy, sort of, macroeconomic situation relative to agriculture and food issues and the massive subsidization of large corporations and so forth and expectation of low cost of food amongst consumers and, oh my God, you know the impacts of mono-culture and all of that so I feel like my commitment to both the farmers, as individuals, and to what they are doing has grown (M2).

Many members expressed increased commitment to the changed they are making: “I think my goals have... been more firmly entrenched, that I want to continue on with this kind of change in my life. Because I feel better” (M19). Change is not explicitly expressed as a goal or motivation. However, members and farmers observe it, celebrate it, and consider change to be a significant part of the CSA experience. Farmers observe change in the members who participate in CSA.

Members observe change in themselves and others, which they link synergistically with CSA participation but not explicitly.

For members, there is an expectation that the change they have made by participating in CSA will spur other changes. Change was not framed as a goal but featured heavily in the CSA experience. Change seems to be an evaluative metric for the CSA experience. For some, there is an expectation that the shift in some of their food practices will motivate shifts in their other food practices. This member explains the impact of CSA participation on their food procurement practices:

Just trying to expand minds, just doing the [Name of Farm] and thinking about, kind of, where are I get my fish from. So, it kind of extends to other food that I'm buying as well and just kind of really the efforts to ensure that the food that I'm getting is... yeah, not, you know, not coming from fish farms (M13).

There is an expectation that new understandings and new ways of doing things will be produced by participation in CSA. The expectation of continued change frame the evaluation of progress towards goals:

maybe on an environmental level of evaluating progress is actually, you know, do we consume less than we did before? Are we doing things more efficiently than we did before? It's almost in some ways the absence of doing something or having something that indicates progress. If you're talking socially or culturally, I guess there's a sense, more and more when we speak with friends or colleagues or what have you, that they're aware of you know local food, organic food and so there is a bit of a sense of a societal shift, for sure, in awareness when it comes to that stuff (M3)

By exploring CSA, members hope to inspire further exploration:

I don't know that I do necessarily evaluate the goals in like a measurable sense. It's my approach to it I think is more exploratory like if I have my farm share and I see that like you can get a certain vegetable without plastic and I'll make an effort to look for it the next time without plastic or I'll 'Oh, I wonder what else that I can buy that's organic.' but I guess, I sort of. Yeah, I wouldn't say that I like quantify the measurement of those goals it's more just like if there's something if I'm like doing laundry or if I'm planning a meal, if I can do it in a more healthy way or more environmentally friendly way (M5).

Members experience changes during their participation in CSA. Members framed this experience of change as a way of evaluating progress towards their goals.



## Parenting

Despite being motivated to participate in CSA by modeling and education for children, the evaluative metrics are less clear. Eight of the sixteen parents interviewed discussed CSA participation as a means for teaching their kids and three of the parents discussed learning from their adult children. The role of their own parents and grandparents in shaping how they view food and model practices for their own children was noted by some members (M10, M19, M20, M21). There is a great deal of reflection by parents of older children on the changes that their children have contributed to (M18, M19, M21), which could be understood to be a type of evaluation, but the parents did not describe it that way. As noted by those reflecting on the importance of relationships, the evaluative part requires a much longer timeline (F10). Of note, members mentioned the food practices of their parents in interviews. While not evaluative, it does provide a little insight into the outcomes of parents who center food, raising children who center food when these children become parents. One member noted that their “mom especially was an avid gardener, and I learned a lot from her in terms of growing plants especially but also vegetables” (M10). Members continue to engage in food procurement practices alongside and with their parents: “My in-laws do a lot of gardening, and we get food from them, too, and you know share. Like my parents are the same” (M3). Another member noted the role their mom had played in their understanding of environmental and gender issues:

I grew up with a mom who is quite progressive, in terms of environmental issues and gender issues . . . My mom sort of got me into a lot of thinking in different ways about things in particular . . . Sort of, I'd say a long trajectory of—throughout this, being critical about myself and the—within the world, and... people around me and how I'm living, like, from a young age, because of the way my mom... worked with us (M20).

Another member talked about the role that their grandparents had played in informing their understandings:

I think of my father—my late father and my grandmother. My father grew up on the farm in rural Saskatchewan. He was raised during the Depression. And this is the way they lived. They lived on their own produce. They composted. They did everything that we think is new today, you know. And I grew up in the city, and—here in Ottawa. And I mean, he always had a huge garden in our backyard. Right in the middle of the city. And he composted before anybody in his neighborhood was. You know, because just the way he did things. And he canned. He did his own canning and his own cooking. I mean, my mother did, too. But he did a lot [chuckles] of the cooking. And so, that—even though, as an adult, I didn't live that out, that's what I saw growing up, with—in my home. And my grandmother in Nova Scotia—who I didn't see all that often because I didn't live in the province. Well, I mean, she—I think she ate Swiss chard every single day of her life. Like, she lived 'til ninety-four, you know. She worked until she was eighty-five. Drove a car 'til she was ninety-two, you know. And she was a . . . proponent of healthy eating and exercise, you know. And she had her garden, and everything was chemical free. And I just observed it, in family. That this is—this is the best way to live (M19).

The parents of multiple members (M13, M10) participate in the same CSA share. One member (M14) received the share they were participating in at the time of the interview from one of their children (M10). Parents do not evaluate progress towards their parenting goals. However, it is interesting to note that the education these individuals received from their own parents shows up in how they raise their children.

## Meat

While there were six members who did meat shares, and three who reduced their meat consumption (M7, M25, M26), one who shopped for “happy meat” (M6), two who hope to do a meat share (M5, M17), and five who are vegan (M4) or vegetarian (M20, M18, M19, M15), evaluation in this area was not as rich as other metrics. There are members who identified themselves as having specific meat consumption practices, however, few identified these practices as a motivation, perhaps accounting for the lack of evaluative metrics.

When asked how they check in on progress towards philosophical or ethical concerns, this vegetarian who had explained their meat abstinence in ethical terms gave the following answer:

Empathy. Empathy. [chuckles] I mean, I've reached the stage right now where it's almost hilarious. I go for my—my hour-long-walk every day, and I'll see a large caterpillar trying to crawl across the sidewalk, and you know. You could see that he's being heated up and burnt. And I'll stop, and I'll get down and physically pick him up and put him in the grass, and I'll give him a squirt of water. I've found—I've found birds with—that were damaged and went back two hours later and captured them in a box, and brought them down to bird center, all the way in the west end. You know. So yeah, there's empathy. There's empathy for—for creatures, and life in general. It's just—it's... it's new for me. I mean, I grew up as a military kid with a gun and a father who had a concept of masculinity that was domination and attack. And... and I've just learned there's other places. Absolutely wonderful (M18).

Of the members who abstained from meat or do a meat CSA, one member noted reduced consumption of meat purchased from a grocery store but reflected that they had not actually tracked how much grocery store meat purchases had been reduced (M16). When asked about other evaluative criteria, this member reflected on the learning curve of getting their share:

But even that is sort of an education of itself. Like, okay well, you know if you get something called green bacon, so it hasn't been smoked or treated in any particular way. You're going to have to figure it out something new to do with it. You're not just going to fry it up and have it with your breakfast. So, it's part of that process (M16).

Members who do meat shares or abstain from meat consumption reflect on their empathy and shifts in their shopping practices to evaluate progress towards their goals.

**Evaluation Summary**

Members and farmers employ a variety of methods to evaluate progress towards their goals. Some members front-end load their evaluations through examination and research before joining. Some members visit the farms they source food from. Members use emotional feedback to gauge if they are on the right path and interrogate this emotional feedback for accuracy. Evaluation changes the longer members participate. This mix of research, intuition, and reflection is combined with attentiveness to new information and ongoing discussions with family to determine if members are moving towards their goals. Progress towards specific goals is evaluated differently from goal to goal.

Farmers have multiple strategies for evaluating sustainable labour conditions. Payroll, ratio of full to part-time employees, daily meetings, bi-weekly co-op meetings, balance sheets for the business are used to check on progress towards this goal. Members discussed sustainable labour conditions as a motivation if the farm they had shares in mentioned labour conditions in their communications. However, members did not have well developed means for evaluating progress on labour conditions.

Support for farmers is understood to contribute to food security and support for prefigurative practices. Members monitored increased purchases of local goods, decreased purchases of non-local goods, intuition, and emotional feedback. Members also noted the volume of local versus non-local products at the farmers' markets. Members evaluated the accessibility and visibility of local food. Members linked support for local food with support for farmers, farms, food security, and a particular type of food system. While there were many metrics associated with the amount of local food procured, metrics for evaluating local food security, for example, are less well developed.

Both farmers and members have clear metrics for evaluating progress on environmental goals. The diversity of flora and fauna, and improvements to the diversity of flora and fauna on farms, was a common response. Reduced bare soil, reduce erosion, water quality, the health of the herd, land fertility, health of trees and perennials, farming inputs and outputs, soil testing, as well as ongoing discussions were mentioned as metrics for evaluating progress towards environmental goals. Members also looked at concrete metrics to evaluate their progress. Garbage, recycling, and food waste outputs are metrics used to check if progress was made towards environmental goals. Assessing the packaging used by farmer, using a carbon footprint calculator, and evaluating the type of transportation and distance travelled to get their share also serve as evaluation metrics. Members also noted change in what people are talking about as a way of checking in. Both farmers and members has well defined metrics for evaluating progress towards environmental goals.

Good food, celebrated by both farmers and members, is evaluated by members using a mix of metrics. Members examined what they learned from the food, the cost compared to the farmers' market, their enjoyment of the food, and their sense of value for money. The longevity, quality, quantity, and usability or familiarity were also evaluated.

Health, despite being a motivation expressed by members and farmers, was challenging to evaluate. Some farmers expressed reluctance to speak to health benefits, but not all did. Some members used practices to evaluate how they are doing with respect to their health. Other members noted the difficulty of evaluating the impact of CSA participation on their health if they had no health issues or if they were experiencing health issues. Another group of members used introspection and reflection to evaluate mental, physical, and emotional health. Energy levels, feelings of health, and weight were also mentioned as metrics.

Community building and community integration are evaluated by a mix of quantifiable metrics such as sales amounts and donation amounts, as well as perceptions of connection and integration. Returning customers and customer feedback were also ways that farmers evaluated their integration into the community.

Accessibility in terms of cost and transportation were evaluated based on pick-up location, among other factors. Pick-up location changes were often cited as an exit reason. Members cited increased accessibility as a goal for CSA. One farmer noted the challenge of getting people to self-select for lower cost shares. Members noted prices as a barrier to accessibility. Of note, most interviewees were current CSA members and while these members did not frame prices and location as an evaluative measure per se, they did explain that these were challenges to accessibility. There is an evaluative dimension to location as multiple members had left previous CSA due to pick-up location. While price was not mentioned as an exit reason, it could function as a barrier to entry, and thus as an evaluative metric for those who do not join CSA.

Change was celebrated. Change in practices, ideas, and understandings is a key feature of the CSA experience. The experience of change serves as an evaluative metric – what changes has CSA participation spurred? What knock-on effects does participation have? The expectation of continued change frames evaluation of progress towards more explicit goals such as environmental stewardship.

Parents did not evaluate progress towards their parenting goals relating to CSA participation. However, it is interesting to note that members reflected on the food practices of their own parents when discussing CSA. Parents also reflected on what they had learned from their own children, who were often cited as an impetus for change.

Members who did meat shares or were vegetarian reflected on their empathy or shifts in shopping practices to evaluate progress towards their goals.

**Chapter 7: Discussion- Connection and Discourse**

My empirical findings add to the literature on both CSA and neoliberal governmentality by illustrating that despite CSA being a form of “highly individualized purchasing” (Guthman, 2008b, 1171), participation in CSA cultivates a sense of connection to a local geographic community, and a community of practice, contrary to the seemingly individualized nature of the market transactions which form the basis of CSA. This sense of connection is supportive of prefigurative practices, farming practices, transitioning to CSA, and activism. Thus, while this may on the surface seem to be a form of “politics via markets” (Guthman, 2008b, 1171), the connections created by CSA participation support social movement practices. This finding supports the work by Chiffolleau that showed the relational impact of CSA includes operator-member relationships, operator-operator relationships, and perhaps even broader alliances (2009). These connections are examples of “alternative economic movements and practices [that] are explicitly about resocializing economic relations” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 79). Rather than protests being held in tension with “every day food activism [that] incorporates neoliberal characteristics” (Guthman, 2008b, 1172), this suggests that everyday food activism is supportive of protests. These “self-conscious consumption” practices (Guthman, 2008b, 1175) are not limiting. Rather than constraining political behaviour, shaping “what is thinkable and hence actable” (Guthman, 2008c, 1241), participation in CSA seems to be a means for exploring and expanding practices, rooted in connection.

The connection experienced in CSA by farmers and members to each other, to their community, and to a community of practice, was one of the key findings of my research. Also notable is how this connection impacted prefigurative practices, farming practices, transitioning to CSA, and activism. I will explore this connection first. The connection experienced by farmers



and members permeates their practices and understandings, refusing “this kind of individuality which has been imposed upon us for several centuries” (Foucault, 1983, 216). In my discussion, I will explore how CSA as a market transaction mediated by solidarity connects participants to both a geographic community, as well as a community of practice. This sense of connection mediates how farmers and members understand entrepreneurialism. This connection also undergirds support for prefigurative practices and farming practices. For farmers and members, this relationality impacts the transition to CSA, as well as activism. This connection is a key characteristic of CSA participation that counters the individualization of neoliberalism.

My findings also add to the literature which explores the “character of prefigurative micropolitical struggles,” an area that sees “less frequent” analysis (Koensler, 2020, 134). The collection of prefigurative practices and connection to a community of practice associated with CSA are reminiscent of the “decentralized, uncoordinated, and place-based consciousness-raising groups” of the feminist movement (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxiii). Likewise, the husbandry of an “emerging political imaginary” centres both “subjects and ethical practices of self-cultivation” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxvi - xxvii). These ethical practices are the “continual exercising, in the face of the need to decide, of a choice to be/act/think a certain way . . . [involving] the embodies practices that bring principles into action” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxviii). These prefigurative practices both shape and demonstrate the discourses and the subjects that are emerging from CSA spaces. My findings contribute to the scholarship on discourses in CSA which has observed that “the practices of the CSA require subjectivation forms, which differ from bourgeois-capitalist social forms” (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 419).

My findings contribute to the literature on community-based economies. The community-based economies perspective makes visible diverse economic practices by avoiding a

capitalocentric reading. Smith's rules for interpretation resonate with this: we may not "rewrite the other's world or impose upon it a conceptual framework that extracts from it what fits with ours. Their reality, their varieties of experience, must be an unconditional datum" (Smith, 1990b, 25). In exploring CSA, I observed economic relations. Yet, they exceed economic relations as defined by neoliberalism. Attentiveness to these "community-based economies" reveals "non-economic values, normative goals, and alternative practices" (Misleh, 2022, 2031). These economic relations are concurrent with subjectivities that exceed those found in neoliberalism. The entrepreneurial dimension of CSA does not mitigate: "the producer subjectivity . . . [which] engages in the time-consuming physical labour, experience and challenge of growing one's own food, and thereby acknowledges the complex natural processes that food production is embedded in" (Pungas et al, 2022, 128, 129, 138). We see the norms of "the moral economy as opposed to the market economy" (Mert-Cakal, & Miele, 2022, 316 & 321). Support for farmers by CSA members resembles the "pragmatic-economic strategy" observed by Blättel-Mink et al (2017) in CSA in which the focus is on "securing the livelihood and survival of agricultural businesses that are too small or otherwise unable to compete on the general market" (420). The embrace of the local we observe in CSA is a means for "resocializing economic relations" through the prioritization of the "local community and its environment" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 80).

The community economy practiced by CSA functions as "a small-scale model for a way of life that could eventually become a more permanent social model" (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 419). This values-practices nexus centres around the farms: "the farms are an arena for converting societal values into practical actions" (Hvitsand, 2016, 333). In converting values into practices, farms operate as "incubation spaces for getting people to shift from an 'I' to a 'we' mentality" (Carolan, 2017, 212, quoting a participant). This mirrors the "spiritual-communal

practice” described by Blättel-Mink et al (2017) in CSA in which community is cultivated “as an alternative to existing tendencies of individualization” (419). This community resists the “enclosure” required to be “discipline[ed]” into neoliberal governmentality (Foucault, 1995, 141-144). The importance of connection to these features highlights the significance of “CSA farmers’ management skills . . . [for] communication and community engaging practices” (Samoggia et al, 2019, 3262).

CSA is rich in subjects that “differ from bourgeois-capitalist social forms” (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 419). By privileging the perspective of farmers, “experts who are part of a *group* and who express the *group's* standpoint” on labour conditions for farmers (Hill Collins, 1989, 750, emphasis added) and who are the “authoritative speakers of [their] experience” (Smith, 1990b, 28), we can see that these farmers are activist citizens who “engage in practices that help make the unthought-of thinkable and the undoable routine (Carolan, 2017, 198-199).

My findings also contribute to the literature on prefigurative practices. CSA participation is a collection of ““routinized way[s] in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood””(Yates, 2015, 238, citing Andreas Reckwitz, 2002, 250) that constitute "prefigurative politics" (Boggs, 1977) displaying that "another world is possible" (Dauvergne and LeBaron, 2014, 150). CSA members and farmers are prefiguring the future through the “embodiment, within the ongoing political practice of a movement, of those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience that are the ultimate goal” (Boggs, 1977, 100). Participants understand themselves to be "producers of meaning" (Melucci, 1994, 113-114) and are aware that through their practices, “political meanings were clearly visible, and communicated to outsiders, in their performances” (Yates, 2015, 253). The intentions of these practices are, in part, “directed towards societal and

not personal concerns” (Halkier and Holm, 2008, 669). For some members and farmers, participation is a form of "resistance to the dominant food systems" through the “actual practices [of] (growing and delivering food within a community)” (Vuilleumier, 2017, 102, brackets in original). Farmers and members are environmental "nomads of the present" because they practice in the present the change that they wish to see in the future (Melucci, 1989, 6). CSA practices are deployed where food meets political innovation, consistent with new social movement activity (Melucci, 1994, 103). Social media posts about these practices function as a "laboratory for antagonism and innovation" (Melucci, 1994, 127). Discursive infrastructure is provided through infrapolitics: “the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action on which our attention has generally been focused” (Scott, 1990, 184).

My findings also contribute to our understanding of enrolling or hailing the subject. Farmers “enroll” members in prefiguration (Steup et al, 2018, 2). We see subjects being produced when “a person recognizes his or her identity in an already existing set of ideas” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177). Farmers and members alike expect farming practices to be “nurturing . . . for the world around us” (F2). There is a dynamic beyond enrolling: “self-identified activists are either attracted by . . . [these] communities or the participation . . . itself cultivates activist subjectivities” (Pungas et al, 2022, 129). How “participation . . . produces . . . subjects” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177) warrants further exploration.

My findings provide a case study of deploying a feminist spatiality which “embraces not only a politics of ubiquity (its global manifestation), but a politics of place (its localization in places created, strengthened, defended, augmented, and transformed by women)” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxiv). CSA participants use global themes in the service of the local. Environmental and community concerns are both ubiquitous and rooted in place. While Misleh

(2022) has critiqued that the diverse economies approach misses how initiatives such as CSA are shaped “by the continuous struggle with the hegemonic economic forms” (Misleh, 2022, 1033), we can see in these findings the struggle between collective standards and individualization. This dialectic relationality between the influence of the individualization of neoliberalism with the environmental goals of these farmers plays out in the discourses seen in CSA participation. In the tension created by this dialect relationality, we see that participants are “active, skilled, make choices, consider, are not fooled or foolish. Within discourse there is play and interplay” (Smith, 1990a, 203). These discourses are created, in part, by women’s work, and there is an active relationality at play: “Women are not just the passive products of socialization; they are active; they create themselves” (Smith, 1990a, 161). By centring the voice of the subject, we bear witness to “the ways that the project of governing and subjecting is never complete” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 25 citing O’Malley et al, 1997, 503). A feminist spatiality reveals the link between the place-based discourses and “the macro-scale processes of social transformation unfolding in multiple and complex spatialities” (Misleh, 2020, 1041).

My research contributes to the literature on embodied practices. Parents display through their practices, of which reflection is a part, that they understand “practiced bodies” (Foucault, 1995, 137-138) to be important to social change. In fact, change is produced through “the development of practices themselves” (Carolan, 2017, 202, citing Warde, 2005, 140). Similar to ethical consumption, these practices span both the articulated and the routine (Began et al., 2010, 755-756). These “micro-processes” (Barnett, 2004, 10) reflect a “true Foucauldian” application of neoliberal governmentality (Guthman, 2008b, 1173). Attention to “people’s actual practices and activities” (Smith, 1990a, 7) illuminates both infrapolitics and involvement in social movement organizations, advocacy, and activism. Attentiveness to these microprocesses and

everyday practices reveals an iterative layering of practices, interpretation, rehearsal, proficiency, and exploration. The interplay between these various practices results in community economy forms that are “populated by a variety of emergent institutions and practices” (Harris, 2009, 60, paraphrasing Gibson-Graham 2006, 54).

Participation in CSA creates a space for both members and farmers to “assume” power, “an assumption that constitutes the instrument of that subject’s becoming” (Butler, 1997, 11, quote in Gibson-Graham, 2006, 24). This exercise of power is constituted through the “continuous repetition and reiteration of ritualized practices” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 24, citing Butler, 1997), cultivating discourse and subjects. While market transactions form the basis of a community of practice, and these relations support state-centred activism, these relations do not eliminate the impacts of, and discourses associated with, neoliberal governmentality, including those noted by Guthman (2008b) of consumer choice, localism, entrepreneurialism, and self-improvement (1171). We see the presence of neoliberal discourses in discussions about self-care, and choice. CSA participation for farmers and members exceeds the discourses associated with neoliberal governmentality through these ritualized practices but retains some influence of the macroeconomic situation in which CSA operates. Parents take an active role in providing embodied, experiential learning opportunities for their children with the goal of raising environmental stewards, for example. However, discourses of choice are evident in the communications from farmers to members, illustrative of the influence of neoliberal governmentality. On the other hand, we see that farmers also are active in the production of discourses around labour conditions which directly challenge neoliberal governmentality, employing “a politics that names and addresses actually existing neoliberalizations of the food system” (Guthman, 2008b, 1180). The successful communication of this framing of the

conditions experienced by farmers under neoliberal governmentality suggests that new discursive challenges to labour conditions, such as those regarding parenting while farming, might find purchase in CSA spaces. CSA provides a collectivist environment for farmers and members to play with discourse; the coherence of discourses within this space is notable, perhaps due to a “net” that supports this exploration.

My second discussion section will explore discourses and subjects. Observing parenting practices allows for the examination of subject-making. Parenting is teaching children how to be a person, what roles are available, and how one embodies or performs those roles. Parents are actively intervening in the discourses their children are being exposed to for the express purpose of raising different subjects. Parents are “living manifestation(s) of action and intention” (Young, 1980, 154), who are active in subject-making as it relates to both themselves and their children. Exploring the discourse of choice illustrates the influence of neoliberal discourses on farm messaging. Farm messaging on labour conditions provides us with an opportunity to explore discourse shaped with greater influence from farmers. The co-production of discourse by farmers and members, influenced but not constrained by neoliberalism, was also striking. We also see how farmers engage with choice as an example of how there is play between neoliberal discourses and messaging by farmers. Discourses around labour conditions are an example of co-production that is illustrative of the power of farm messaging. A newer theme being explored by farmers is around parenting and farming<sup>13</sup>; will this become as salient as labour messaging? This tension between discursive influence of neoliberalism and farmers, leads me to ask if farm messaging on parenting while farming be shaped more by neoliberalism or by farmers? Then, the

---

<sup>13</sup> See Wilson’s (2022), “The Accidental Feminist Movement - The Role of Women in Community Supported Agriculture in Southern Ontario,” for a more focused look at discussions of parenting while farming. The increased saliency of feminist themes in CSA spaces is heralding a shift that scholarship should be attentive to in terms of discursive and political openings.

net that lifts these practices is explored to explain the discursive coherence found between CSA practices and complementary sustainability practices.



**Relationships and embedded economies: Market transactions mediated by solidarity**

The most striking finding derived from participatory observation, interviews, and social media observations was the sense of connection felt by members and farmers. Not only did members and farmers experience a connection to each other, they also experience a sense of connection to a community of practice. This connection counters the individualization of neoliberalism as well as undergirding other practices. Connection to community need not specifically mean geographical proximity. Community can be based on "similarity in goals for food systems, and a concept of local or national political economy"; a sort of "imagined community" with those who share your political or economic beliefs (Beagan et al., 2010, 763).<sup>14</sup> Food is a tie to community, especially when rooted in tradition, although those communities may be formed based on cultural, historical, ethnocultural, or racial ties (Beagan et al., 2010, 765-766). The connection generated by CSA participation resonates with the description of Community Supported Agriculture spaces as laboratories that act as "incubation spaces for getting people to shift from an 'I' to a 'we' mentality" (Carolan, 2017, 212, quoting a participant).

Farmers cultivate relationships with their members. Farmers cultivate relationships with other farmers, a finding which is in line with producer-producer relations leading to embeddedness in alternative supply chains (Chiffolleau, 2009). Farmers are often seen demonstrating their embeddedness in their local communities on social media. This connection is

---

<sup>14</sup> While Benedict Anderson's (1983) *Imagined Communities* is not cited by Beagan et al. (2010), they do use the term (766) and it is worth reviewing the original concept proposed by Anderson. While he refers to nations, the concept is more broadly applicable: "an imagined political community . . . it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion . . . it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson, 1983, 6-7).

also evident in interactions with farmers. Farm neighbours are often seen engaging in exchanges of labour with each other over the course of the growing season. We also see exchanges of labour and knowledge, intergenerationally, between farmers. This relational network of support and encouragement is evident in social media posts but also in interactions with farmers.

Whether I asked a ‘research question’ in an interview, or whether I was looking for calendula to make salve, farmers were keen to sing the praises of their peers, explaining that ‘so-and-so’ has a strong social media presence (Field Notes on the Go, July 30, 2019) or ‘so-and-so’ has farming practices that the farmer can vouch for (Field Notes on the Go, August 8, 2019).

Members describe the importance of relationships with their farmer(s). Members did not, however, identify any new in-person or virtual relationships with other members but described a strong sense of connection with others sharing the same practices or doing the same things.

Connections experienced by farmers and members influence entrepreneurialism, prefigurative practices, farming practices, health, transitioning to CSA, as well as activism. There is a strong rejection of the anonymization of the industrial food system by farmers and members. This rejection of the anonymization of neoliberalism can be seen in the way community is embraced.

### *Community*

Connection is of great importance to farmers. Farmers explained the significance of connection to building community and why that sense of community matters: “I like the contact with the families . . . everyone sees exactly how the food is being produced” (F7). This farmer emphasizes the importance of bringing people to the farm so that there is an opportunity for experiential learning and for human contact (F7). This was echoed by other farmers, as well, who note that “really, building community... that's the goal that's always going to remain, that we're always going to work hard towards meeting that goal” (F6). This resonates with findings that the success of CSA as an alternative is dependent on the involvement of members with the implication that “CSA farmers’ management skills may evolve to ensure the performance of communication and community engaging practices” (Samoggia et al, 2019, 3262). Community building is an alternative to the certification process for a farmer who practices regenerative agriculture and is not certified:

that's another sort of issue that I have the certification, the label. The idea of labels that... keep the place of a relationship, that take the place of confidence in Earth, you know? It's—I don't think that that's the right move, you know. I think people need to truly understand (F7).

Visiting the farm meets multiple motivations mentioned by farmers such as education through experiential learning and connection. Farmers relish “the direct contact with the customers and that growing people's food is, it's like you're having this very close involvement in their lives” (F9). CSA is “a direct connection” (F1).

Members, like farmers, were enthusiastic about the importance of creating community, belonging to this community, and supporting this community. Yet, there were no new relationships with other individuals cultivated during CSA participation. Despite no real-life relationships, members felt connected: “just to be part of a group . . . And know that we're all in

this kind of together with the farmers . . . it matters that we're part of that community” (M20). Members and farmers discuss feeling a great sense of connection with others stemming from their participation in CSA.

This connection to community undergirds avoiding certain consumption practices. Caring is understood to be reciprocal, and noting that big box stores do not care, members sought to avoiding “some big company that doesn’t have that vested interest in our community” (M12). Members understand that avoiding these mainstream food procurement options have financial implications for the members of their community: “my money is going directly to somebody who works directly in that and is cutting out all of the different—the intermediary steps that inflate food prices and mean that the end result, or the person at the end of the line gets less of the profits” (M25, M26). The flow of money – who benefits from the purchases made – is one dimension of boycotting certain practices. Members note that “at a big box store, the money doesn’t stay in our community” (M3). The goal orientation of “the great big agricultural machine” is to “make profit” in conflict with the goal orientations of CSA members (M18). Moreover, this profit orientation means these “mega-agriculture” operations “don’t produce food there” (M7). Members have clearly explained that the profit orientation of larger farming operations and the retailers that sell their products, results in poor labour practices, does not produce food, and results in a system that deprives communities of financial support. This critique, via avoiding certain consumption practices, however, does not provide comfort for those from “somewhere else and somebody else’s economy” (M19).

This is an example of the localization of food systems presented “as a way to resist the globalizing food regime” (Andrée et al, 2014, 37). Localism, inclusive of the local food movement (Sharzer, 2012; Guthman, 2008a) is “a collaborative effort to build more locally

based, self-reliant food economies” (Feenstra, 2002, 100). There is an acknowledgement that foods produced outside the geographic community evoked when describing connection are “not necessarily ethically produced” (M6) but there seems to be a limit to the geographic scope of the practices designed to address these issues. This perhaps reflects Guthman’s (2008a) concern that “localism as a strategy can be defensive, xenophobic” (436). A more generous interpretation from Osterweil (2004) is also applicable here:

The embrace of local power doesn’t have to mean parochialism, withdrawal, or intolerance, only a coherent foundation from which to navigate the larger world . . . you can have an identity embedded in local circumstances and a role in the global dialogue. And that this dialogue exists in service of the local (113).

Members and farmers are attentive to the needs of the local and their dialogue does “exist in service of the local” (Osterweil, 2004, 113). Reflecting on the activism undergirded by CSA participation and the regional, provincial, and indeed, global focus of this activism, Osterweil’s (2004) interpretation seems more apt. This embrace of the local can also be understood to be the resocialization of economic relations:

many alternative economic movements and practices [that] are explicitly about resocializing economic relations . . . economic decisions . . . are made in the lights of ethical discussions conducted within various communities . . . [and] privileges care of the local community and its environment (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 80).

This connection is bounded by geography in reference to the community of CSA participants, but the community of practice that members feel connected to is not bound by the same geographic limits. However, when members or farmers refer to keeping money in the community, the community they refer to is indeed geographically bounded. The communities that members feel affinity for because of CSA overlap in some ways. The community specific to the CSA members participate in has some geographic overlap with the community that is referenced with respect to keeping money in the community or the community that is referenced

in keeping farmers in the community – there is a spatially bound community that one has an obligation of care for. The community of practice, however, rejects these geographic bounds.

*Connection to a community of practice*

Beyond the geographically bounded community evoked by members and farmers, lies a connection to a community of practice. This connection is galvanizing for members. This connection to a community of practice is suggestive of “collectivist political subjects” (Guthman, 2007b, 474). Members describe a sense of connection to a community of practice: “although we do not have a community that we—that we are part of, I think we're part of a global community, of people who are just... re-organising their lives” (M18). This sense of global responsibility is also seen in ethical consumption (Johnston and Baumann, 2014, 19) which deploys “food decision-making in order to enact a political stance relating to discourses of moral good and global responsibility” (Beagan et al, 2010, 753). This sense of connection undergirds many of the practices associated with CSA participation. This is illustrative of the “innovative forms of individualized collective action” that are not readable by the lens of neoliberal governmentality (Barnett, 2005, 11). The emphasis on connection is rooted in a worldview based on connection that the closed system we live in must function for those within to function as well, distinct from the compartmentalization of neoliberalism. For example, the understanding that our health and the environment are closely intertwined is expressed often by both members and farmers. I read neoliberalism’s individualism beyond a compartmentalization of us as people – indeed the individualization of neoliberalism siloes more than humans. Inherent to neoliberalism is the dismantling of connection: “Antipolitical, asocial, individual, disembedded, rational, efficient, short-term, calculable, incontestable – these are the qualities associated with economic transactions mediated by the (capitalist) market” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 83). Whether this is our connections to each other or the connection between the various facets of our existence. Neoliberalism separates us from each other – this each other inclusive of flora, fauna, and our

shared well-being. The understanding that our physical health as humans is related to the health of our environment is contrary to neoliberalism which views negative environmental impacts as externalities, a fancy way of saying that capitalists do not want their profits reduced. These members are countering this separation by making an explicit link between our farming practices, the health of our environment, and our health as individuals. This sense of reforging connections that have been and continue to be severed by neoliberalism is consistent throughout member discussions. Indeed, CSA members challenge this siloed and isolationist perspective with a worldview based on relationships between our environment, our health, and each other. Indeed, “that whole ethical thing and the environmental thing” are in relation with each other (M18). This relationality is centred and celebrated by CSA practices: “my vegetable and my dinner plate suddenly had faces to them, you know. Like, okay, there's kids. We're supporting his family” (M19). This mirrors the “spiritual-communal practice” described by Blättel-Mink et al (2017) in CSA in which community is cultivated “as an alternative to existing tendencies of individualization” (419).

Members describe a sense of connection with a community of practice, with others who are “part of a global community of people who are just reorganizing their lives” (M18). Members also describe a sense of connection with “a community that supports a family, so that they can live out their philosophy, their dreams” (M18). This member has described a sense of connection with both unknown, unacquainted individuals who are engaging in similar practices with the shared intention of responding to the need for “drastic change . . . if we're going to survive,” as well as a more geographically contained community of fellow CSA members who are supporting “a family” (M18). This connection directly resists the “enclosure” required to be “discipline[ed]” into neoliberal governmentality in which “each individual has his own place; and each place its



individual” (Foucault, 1995, 141-144). This connection also resonates with “an identity embedded in local circumstances and a role in the global dialogue” (Osterweil, 2004, 113). Members connect the global and the local. The connection with these communities is one dimension of the reconnections and connections knitted together through CSA participation.

*Entrepreneurialism*

Alongside the connectedness between farmers, between farmers and members, and between members and a community of practice, lies the business dimension of the relationship. Indeed, the sense of connection and community informs the market transactions of CSA. This both social and economic connection re-imbeds economic relations into the social fabric of society. What is striking is the connectedness of these two dimensions: the economic and the social are linked. For farmers, the relationship with their customers is essential: “one of the most important parts is also for me is having that connection with my consumers” (F1). This is an example of “politics via markets” (Guthman, 2008b, 1171), leading to “embeddedness of sales activity in technical and friendship relations . . . [which] favour[s] co-operation towards innovation” (Chiffolleau, 2009, 219). Attentiveness to these “community-based economies” reveals “non-economic values, normative goals, and alternative practices” (Misleh, 2022, 2031). The entrepreneurial dimension of these economies does not mitigate: “the producer subjectivity . . . [which] engages in the time-consuming physical labour, experience and challenge of growing one’s own food, and thereby acknowledges the complex natural processes that food production is embedded in” (Pungas et al, 2022, 128, 129, 138). We see in CSA ingenuity, breeding, harvesting, processing, and many other labour-intensive practices deployed with a relational sensibility – in relation with the environment and the community.

There are elements of entrepreneurialism – there is an exchange of goods for money, and farmers note the slim profit margins and the importance of keeping customers. However, there is an additional dimension that challenges a characterization of this relationship as neoliberal. There is an emphasis on the re-embedding of these relationships in the social fabric of the communities in which these exchanges of goods for money take place. Does CSA “contribute to

the production of neoliberal subjectivities of the sort that acquiesce to consumer society” (Guthman, 2008a, 1181)? Members describe wanting “to get away from consumerism” (Jen, n.d.). Members acknowledge that “we live in a society of people wanting convenience” (M23). Members are aware of our “consumer society” (Guthman, 2008a, 1181). As observed by this member:

in our kind of consumerist and product-driven and waste-driven kind of system that we operate in, it's easy that you have everything at your fingertips. All the choices in the world and you can have anything that you want at anytime. And I guess I was starting to get a little uncomfortable with that and this is just a great option for channeling out some of that noise (M4).

Members are aware of and critical of consumerism, but not of economic support nor of market transactions, which are seen as distinct. Relational and economic threads intertwine with CSA. Both farmers and members understand that the exchange of goods for money is a dimension of the connection. However, there is an insistence that this exchange should not be anonymous, that we should know the person “who's selling us, and we've just grown to this point, we just don't know the person who's doing it” (F10). This connection is important for farmers who note the importance of maintaining relationships “for any business that has very slim profit margins, like a farm” (F6). This connection is not divorced from the economic. Rather, these “CSA initiatives use the conventions of the moral economy as opposed to the market economy” (Mert-Cakal, & Miele, 2022, 316 & 321). These threads of economic and noneconomic relations are interwoven throughout – there is indeed an economic dimension to these relationships, but they are more than simply economic relationships. This bears some resemblance with the “pragmatic-economic strategy” observed by Blättel-Mink et al (2017) in CSA in which the focus is on “securing the livelihood and survival of agricultural businesses that are too small or otherwise unable to compete on the general market” with the more limited understanding of community as “limited

to financing of the farmers by the members” (420). The re-embedding of these food procurement relationships in the local economy have resulted in shifts in food consumption and perceived health.

We see that slim profit margins have implications for other practices. Cost saving practices are also a farming practice. Sometimes this involves multiple prototypes to achieve the desired result:

Our mobile shade unit withstood the storm test of 60 mph straight winds and dumping, pounding rain yesterday! This is huge for us! It means our second prototype is a winner! . . . I couldn't swallow the price tag of the units in the grazing magazines. This one was built for many thousands less and we are so happy it passed its first major test. Our newly planted silvopasture will take years to provide shade, so for now, this is it! (Joia Food Farm, n.d.). [ID: Picture of a mobile shade unit with sheep under the shade].

To grow the vegetables and raise the meat, farmers need to engage in breeding, ingenuity, harvesting, processing, and a myriad of tasks associated with each practice. One element of these many practices is that farmers try to save money in a capitalist system. I can see how this DIY (Do It Yourself), frugal philosophy could be construed as entrepreneurial, but I am reluctant to categorize everything that allows us to navigate livelihoods under capitalism as ‘entrepreneurial’.

The economic dimension of CSA is not hidden by farmers. The economic dimension is tempered or undergirded by a relational approach to the economic dimension of farming.

Relational in the sense of connection with others who share the environment, relational in the sense of connection with the people who eat what you produce, and relational in the sense of connection with a community of practice. These relations recognise “economic co-implication, interdependency, and social connection is actively occurring. These practices involve ethical considerations and political decisions that constitute social and economic being” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 83). This relationality is a rejection of the anonymization of neoliberalism.

*Prefigurative Practices*

The connection that members feel for their farmers knits the economic and the social. We also see that economic support is understood by members to buttress prefigurative practices. These market transactions are both relational, economic, and prefigurative in their orientation. Supporting prefigurative practices is another dimension of supporting local farms. Providing support for farmers to “live out their philosophy” (M18) is providing support for the farmers who are “not willing to make compromises . . . (and) be the change” (F7). Members explain that “their farming practices are things, we want to support” (M23). Farmers are able, with this support, to avoid farming practices that are not “completely aligned with our values” and, moreover, “show that it’s possible to do that” (F7). This is an example of CSA functioning as “a small-scale model for a way of life that could eventually become a more permanent social model” (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 419). Members are critical about the farming practices used by farmers:

The amount of our carbon-fuelled equipment that they use, some of the practices in terms of how they rotate their fields, what kind of cover crops they use, how much natural fertilizer, how they manage their water, all that kind of stuff also was important to us and part of the reason why we wanted to support smaller CSAs . . . I think what I didn’t like about some of the really big farms is some of the means that they have to use in order to be able to support the amount of farm space that they’re using. Right down to like, the size of the greenhouses that they have, so they are having to use a lot of electricity to keep all of that stuff running (M25, M26).

There is an expectation of shared practices and shared values in this relationship. This values-practices nexus centres around the farms: “the farms are an arena for converting societal values into practical actions” (Hvitsand, 2016, 333). One member noted that they would rather “my money stay in my local economy” and expected that their farmer would share this value saying “she’s likely taking that money and buying whatever she needs from someone else local” (M3).

Prefiguration has an economic dimension.

Members also explain that their actions are prefigurative:

I think anyone that works in climate change or on anything environmental, you feel like you have to be a bit of a spokesperson to the cause. And I think you're kind of expected to lead by example in a lot of ways . . . I do enjoy when I can show other people or tell other people about it and see that these are options (M4).

Members are aware of themselves as "producers of meaning" (Melucci, 1994, 113-114).

Members are aware that their practices ensure that "political meanings were clearly visible, and communicated to outsiders, in their performances" (Yates, 2015, 253). Members also express that there is a moral dimension to their choices regarding who and which practices to support: "to be honest with you, it's that moral of who you are supporting" (M15).

There is indeed "enrolling" in prefiguring the shared future being knitted by farmers and members together (Steup et al, 2018, 2). Or hailing as described by Guthman (2008b): "subjects are constituted through ideology, so that subjectivity is produced when a person recognizes his or her identity in an already existing set of ideas" (1177). There is a shared expectation that farming practices employed will be "nurturing . . . for the world around us" (F2). Prefiguration coalesces around environmental stewardship. Practices build the desired future and demonstrate how to achieve them (Melucci, 1989). CSA farmers and members are "nomads of the present" because they practice in the present the change that they wish to see in the future (Melucci, 1989, 6). These practices, deployed in the day-to-day lives of people where needs, such as food, meet political innovation are consistent with new social movement activity (Melucci, 1994, 103).

Members also note the role of connection or social pressure in influencing their choices: "I knew quite a few people who are sort of trying to make a more conscious decision about eating ethically sourced animals that had been treated well" (M16). This social pressure to prefigure can be contrasted with social pressure to conform experienced by vegetarians which seems to be galvanizing for their vegetarianism rather than discouraging (M19). We see multiple

forms of social encouragement to prefigure by engaging in certain practices: enrolling with shared values, social encouragement for new practices, and the galvanization of opposition. Enrolling for some members resonates in both their professional and private lives in environmental stewardship, in much the same way the personal and the professional are “melled together” (F9) for farmers. Farmers do not view the environmental practices on the farm as distinct from their personal practices: “It’s kind of a funny lifestyle in that the professional and the private are . . . melled together . . . I think the decisions that we make as organic farmers . . . bleed into our personal lives” (F9). Members describe an impetus that connects their practices relating to CSA with their complementary sustainability practices. Farmers describe a similar impetus, noting that they are “very dedicated to trying to have a positive impact on our environment” (F9). That is, for both members and farmers, there is a discursive coherence between food procurement and complementary sustainability practices, and for the farmers, between their personal and professional lives. For both farmers and members, there is professional and personal coherence around environmental stewardship, particularly relating to farming practices and transportation. For both members and farmers, the market transactions are undergirded by prefiguration and connection. Enrolling taps into the personal and professional coherence around environmental stewardship for members. The personal and professional coherence is evident in the emphasis that both farmers and members place on farming practices that are oriented towards environmental sustainability. “Enrolling” (Steup et al, 2018, 2) implies a pre-existing match which allows for the connection to spark; the discursive coherence experienced by farmers and members suggests co-production of discourse in the time since enrolling. However, I felt throughout my research that the members interviewed were somehow exceptional in their fluency in environmental discourses prior to enrolling. This resembles the

dynamic observed by Pungas et al (2022) in terms of subjectivities: “self-identified activists are either attracted by . . . [these] communities or the participation . . . itself cultivates activist subjectivities” (129). How individuals become fluent enough to be enrolled in the messaging provided by farmers demands further study.



*Farming Practices*

There is no consensus on which farming practices are adequate to get us where we want to go, however, there is consensus that farming practices are key to our success. There is also an acknowledgement that what practices are understood to be effective change over time, whether a shift from “beyond organic” to “regenerative” (F7), or a broader awareness that “we’ve got to keep being critical about what our objectives are there are how we can keep working towards meeting them” (F6). Farms engage in a numbers of farming practices that are important to both farmers and members. Members had clear explanations of what practices they preferred and their reasoning for making that choice: “I would say the primary motivation of the CSAs, in particular, was to reduce our carbon footprint in terms of procuring our food and the way the food is grown” (M25, M26). The practice of research for members involves learning about the farming practices used by the farmers. The emphasis on farming practices by farmers and members intersects with a diversity of views on which farming practices are best.

Farms often reflected on the inadequacy of these shared standards, either in reference to a specific issue, such as plastics, or more generally, such as reflection on organic standards. Fatchancefarmstead shares their “chicken scratches” (illegible handwriting) on the organic certification forms as they talk about how the certification process is “far from perfect and I would be a liar if I were to say I loved everything about the process, but it is the only one we have to keep producers legit and to keep eaters informed” (Fat Chance Farmstead, n.d.). The inadequacy of organic standards also came up in interviews as well. This farmer started at an organic incubator farmer and after buying land of their own, “didn’t take certification” following that purchase (F7). The farmer explained that “‘beyond organic’ is the term that we used to use. Now, we use ‘regenerative’” (F7). Their experience at the incubator farm, where other farmers

were spraying chemicals that were “on the list” of chemicals that are permitted for organic producers, motivated them to set an example (F7). The farmer explained, “it says on the label that it kills bees . . . I don’t care what list it’s on, I’m not using that” (M7). Despite being told ““Oh, you’ll see. After three years, you’ll be using it, too,” the farmer proudly demonstrates with their farming practices, “we’re well more than three years and we’ve never used anything” (F7).

This farmer explains their persistent adherence to their values in the face of resistance from others:

We've been—we've been able to... avoid using any of these... products that we've don't agree with. That are—yeah, they are certified for, and permissible for organic, but they don't meet our standard. We haven't use them, and we've still been able to produce, you know great food for—for people in a way that is completely aligned with our values. And you know, what we've—what I go with usually is that I'm not willing to make compromises. [laughs] So... people call you names when you—when you talk like that, but [laughs] you know. We've been able to do it. So, you know again, if I go back, the idea for us was to show what's possible, and sort of like, be the change. And that's what we—that's what our goal has been. And I think that was we've been doing. We've shown that it's possible to do that (F7).

Discussions around organic standards ranged from a process to “keep producers legit” (Fat Chance Farmstead, n.d.) to those –such as F7 who feel the standards are woefully inadequate to protect the environment. There is tension between those who feel this lowest standard affords a kind of legitimacy, and those who reject this lowest standard entirely. This echoes some of the concerns expressed by Guthman (2014) regarding organic standards being a form of opt-out from command-and-control economies, shifting control of environmental regulation to the market, while ignoring labour concerns (Guthman, 2008b, 1180). Farmers express concerns that these regulations do not adequately protect the environment and suggested trust rooted in relationships as a counter to these regulations. The extra-territoriality of discourse is also apparent here when we see the concerns of farmers in the Ottawa Valley echoed in the concerns of farmers in Italy who:

highlighted the expensive fees for official organic certification, which increase the price of the final product without actually being able to set high standards. Others also pointed out that organic labels still permit the use of some chemicals which most farmers in the network refused to use . . . direct visits of consumers and producers would allow the development of personal relations in a way that simply describing themselves could not, and this was considered an effective way of remedying some of the problems with “self-certification” (Koenler, 2020, 142).

We see here the reproduction of global themes in the service of the local with respect to organic certification, and with respect to community. Environmental and community concerns are both ubiquitous and rooted in place, in parallel with a feminist spatiality which: “embraces not only a politics of ubiquity (its global manifestation), but a politics of place (its localization in places created, strengthened, defended, augmented, and transformed by women)” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxiv).

Whether online in the public square, or in interviews, farmers draw attention to the inadequacy of the regulated standards for achieving the desired environmental outcomes and emphasize the importance of re-embedding our economic exchanges in community. Sometimes this community has a punitive dimension. The post below about plastics that notes the distinction between a practice being permitted versus being good, reminds of me small town shaming and the social costs of doing something you should not:

“I see a lot of "organic" farms using a LOT of plastics, and extreme amounts of nutrients. This is BAD for the soil, the worms, and all around bad for the natural ecosystems. Just because you are permitted, doesn't mean you should” (Mountain Man, n.d.).

“Just because you are permitted doesn't mean you should” (Mountain Man, n.d.). This sentiment is seen in the reflections of both farmers and members. Both farmers and members express an insistence that our collectively agreed standards and practices are inadequate for achieving our goals. This also challenges the collective wisdom about what organic standards should be by insisting that current metrics are inadequate. This post also pushes this challenge into the public

square, and more specifically into a forum where CSA members, as well as a wider audience, can engage in this discussion. A social accountability premised on having a social relationship. While this certainly individualizes the response to plastics, the critical reflection on our collective failure to address these concerns is noteworthy. While the diverse economies approach misses “addressing how alternative food initiatives are shaped by the continuous struggle with the hegemonic economic forms that develop across multiple places and scales” (Misleh, 2022, 1033), we can see here how the struggle between collective standards and individualization plays out with respect to plastics and organic standards. In the tension between shared standards and individual shaming, as well as prefigurative practices, we can see a dialectic relationality between the influence of the individualization of neoliberalism with the environmental goals of these farmers. This relationality is illustrative of “how particular structures and political conjunctures can influence the scope and content of AFNs while also . . . [demonstrating] the possibilities of these initiatives for articulating social change” (Misleh, 2022, 1034).

Farmers also reflected on who their work served. Are we striving to produce “more honey, more pollination, etc” or are we shifting our orientation to ask, “how can we be of service to the honeybee, how can we best support her?” (Ferme et Forêt, n.d.). Getting the animals to processing calmly, as opposed to efficiently, a quality demanded by neoliberalism, is another dimension of this sort of reflection, as stonepostfarms explains:

all the hard work, our animal husbandry practices, and all the love and respect we give these birds, and all our animals, is really paying off and giving these birds the best life we can. I felt so proud that our farming practices gave these birds a happy life and prepared them for their final day, to make it as low stress as possible. Days like today make me proud to be a farmer and to provide the best meat we can to our Amazing customers! (StonepostFarms, n.d.). [ID: A picture of a flock of chickens].

Who are you working for? That question strikes at the heart of capitalism. To what end are you orienting your life? Whom do you serve? I read this as a challenge to Adam Smith’s

admonishing of caring for others, “he intends only his own gain” (A. Smith, 1976, 456, quoted in Foucault, 2008, 278). In line with political consumption, these practices suggest an intentionality “directed towards societal and not personal concerns” (Halkier and Holm, 2008, 669). This challenges how we orient our practices. Our food production could be oriented towards achieving many outcomes – these posts online are encouraging us to reorient ourselves in service of other fauna. This challenge to the profit-centred orientation of food production occurs both in practice – at the level of the farm or abattoir, at the level of training the attendees how to be of service to bees - and in text and image, in the town square of social media. Vuilleumier (2017) notes this connection between practices, narratives, and goals, in which the practices constitute a form of “resistance to the dominant food systems” in the form of infrapolitics: “actual practices (growing and delivering food within a community)” (Vuilleumier, 2017, 102, brackets in original). There is connection between the narratives, or discourses, and the goals, or intentionality. Of note is that this kind of reflection or evaluation is also a practice: “our farming practices gave these birds a happy life and prepared them for their final day” (StonepostFarms, n.d.). These farmers reflect on the effectiveness of their practices. This reflection, a critical glance backward, informs future practices, as well as providing an opportunity to gauge whether their practices are knitting us closer to the future.

Knowledge is not necessarily in the service of self – it can serve others and be intended to serve others. The practice of reflexivity – how can we help non-human species imperiled by our actions – shifts farming and animal husbandry practices. How can we change our practices to better support other species? This reflexivity extended to cattle:

Seeing his calm composure as he respectfully works solo with a herd of 170 cattle . . . paired with the herd's clear understanding of his simple, calm and confident dutch instructions make for an almost magical sight. It sure is something to witness this skill.

And how heartwarming knowing that this is the work that regenerative agriculture requires of her farmers (Grazingdays, n.d.)

This description of handling technique celebrates skill and pushes back against the automation and feedlots that are 'productive' in the sense of neoliberal 'efficiency' but not beneficial to animals or land. This is a celebration of the skills required for prefigurative practices. This is a celebration of skills required for regenerative agriculture, centering both what is happening and how it happens. The scene, of calmly herded cattle, is about regenerative agriculture. There is definitional work here – regenerative agriculture is calm and respectful, regenerative agriculture requires patience and skill, works with the animals in its care, and demands both spatial and handling skills. Through the deployment of these particular practices - “routinized way[s] in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood”(Yates, 2015, 238, citing Andreas Reckwitz, 2002, 250) we see a form of "prefigurative politics" (Boggs, 1977) demonstrating that "another world is possible" (Dauvergne and LeBaron, 2014, 150). The “embodiment, within the ongoing political practice of a movement, of those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience that are the ultimate goal” prefigures the desired future (Boggs, 1977, 100). This is a stark contrast to feed lots and industrial abattoirs which centre pace and productivity with little care or concern for human or animal. These examples of animal husbandry of bees, poultry, cattle are not examples of “asocial economic atomism” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 83, citing Polanyi, 1968). Rather, they are rooted in connection with the animals and centre practices that resist neoliberal efficiency.

Farmers demonstrate practices for their fellow farmers and provide education about the environmental impacts of these practices. These demonstrations happen in venues farmers seek out to expand their knowledge, as well as online, making for an audience of farmers in the room

and the virtual audience of farmers, members, and others. We also see the connection with organizations such as the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the National Farmers' Union – Ontario, and the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario. These conversations about how to farm better are facilitated by farmers and organizations. Floatinglotusfarmstead shares what happens when it rains in a demonstration by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (Floating Lotus Farmstead, n.d.). Farms took the Climate Action Pledge through the National Farmers Union - Ontario, demonstrating practices and inspiring others on social media (National Farmers Union - Ontario, n.d.). Many of the farming practice that farmers describe here are demonstrated on social media, for an audience that extends beyond their geographic location. With these posts, the farmers are explaining the reasoning behind their practices, or their 'why,' as well as the methods, or the 'how'. These farmers are encouraging other farmers to take up these practices. They are demonstrating the perceived benefits of these practices to their social media followers, as well as those who follow the various hashtags. Thus, farmers who take the #ClimateActionPledge and who follow the hashtag, demonstrate to others the practices they are engaging with. Farmers following the hashtag find new approaches, solidarity with their fellow pledgers, and like-minded others. While this campaign is organized by the NFU-Ontario, the farms "inspire others to follow suit" (National Farmers Union – Ontario, n.d.). The soil benchmark study is an example of a campaign organized by EFAO & NFU-Ontario, participated in by farms in specific locations, but discursively, extra-locally, via social media. This extra-local communication about farming practices links the specific local with the discursive global. Farmers are demonstrating the farming techniques in educational settings, such as conferences, and to their social media audience, inclusive of both farmers and members. The demonstration of practice is notable for being performed via social movement organizations. These social media spaces are generative,

acting as a "laboratory for antagonism and innovation" (Melucci, 1994, 127). These laboratories also provide discursive 'infrastructure' through infrapolitics: "the cultural and structural underpinning of the more visible political action on which our attention has generally been focused" (Scott, 1990, 184). These social media posts and the practices they are based on are also significant for not being "entrepreneurial" as farmers are not using "market mechanism to solve problems" (Guthman, 2008b, 1177), but rather are seeking to expand environmentally sustainable farming practices via activism. This is collective activism; this does not emphasize the individual who will be liberated through consumption thereby "starving social or political activism" (DeLind, 2011, 276). Rather, farming practices are celebrated by "collectivist political subjects" (2007b, 474) using "long-standing social-movement strategies pursuing state-mandated protections for labor, the environment, and the poor" (Alkon and Guthman, 2017, 12).



*Transition draws on relationships*

Members come to participate in CSA through an iterative process involving self-reflection, critical thinking, the way they were raised, and a prioritization of farming practices. The practice of research is undergirded by an understanding that while knowledge isn't perfect, one must read, see, explore, and experience to understand. Members also draw on their relationships to help make this transition.

One member describes making the choice to participate in a CSA as part of a larger plan to reduce consumerism and live “a more ethical life”:

the big thing for 2020 is going to be working towards living a more ethical life. I'm starting off with a #NoBuy January to get away from consumerism, but I also have some plans around more farmer's market shopping, getting a CSA membership, improving my mending skills, making more of the things that I need and use, and volunteering for causes I believe in (Jen, n.d.). [ID: A picture of a snow-covered scene from a running path].

These practices, of shifting food procurement practices, making and mending, getting a CSA, and volunteering, involve planning and are often grouped with other practices that the members discuss together, inclusive of reducing consumption, changes to food procurement, and volunteering.

Despite there being no new in-person relationships between members, members use their existing networks as a source of information: “I may have spoken to few other people who had different kinds of selections. And I, it affirmed that I found, I thought we with the right person (M21). Members were often not looking actively for a CSA, but it was an idea that was percolating on the back burner and there were several things that had to fall into place to make it possible:

having a chat with a friend at work one day. And she mentioned that her friends were starting this—that the pick-up was, like, really close to my house. So, that was a—that was probably the biggest factor. So, I wasn't—I wouldn't say I was actively looking or

doing any comparison shopping. It was just that... it was—I knew it was something I want it to do and couldn't really find the right opportunity when I kind of casually looked before that. And then this one came up and was a good fit (M24).

There is a temporal dimension. These shifts take time, time for new understandings to take hold, time to find the right fit. Members also demonstrate an openness to different practices and an openness to change. There is hailing here – people recognise their “identity in an already existing set of ideas” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177). However, rather than the set of ideas suggested by Guthman (2008b) of “choice, responsibility, and competitiveness” (1177), the ideas are relational responsibility, connection, environmental stewardship, and critical reflection on our economic system.

*Activism supported by relationships*

The activism that members and farmers engage in is also predicated on relationality, that we are connected to each other and our environment. Of note, is the way that farming practices are understood to be related to activism. Farmers donate their time and labour to solidarity and advocacy organizations. One of the farmers works as a National Farmers Union president, others are board members. Farmers engage with both discursive dimensions of food politics and practices more closely associated activism and protest.

Rootedoakfarm attended the EFAO conference and linked their attendance with World Soil Day, their environmental beliefs, and why they farm: “What does soil mean to you? To us it is the canvas on which we paint our environmental beliefs” (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). [ID: Hand holding soil and a worm]. Soil as canvas for environmental beliefs. The beliefs are embodied in the practices that attend to the soil. Discourse is communicated on the canvas of the soil. In this post we see a renewal of passion and finding solidarity. Solidarity with “ecological farmers” (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.) in a classical SMO (Social Movement Organization). Farmers talk to the “the National Farmers Union's Youth Convergence on following one's political ideals and farming (Grazingdays, n.d.). [ID: Two pictures of Paul speaking to a room full of people]. Not only do farmers practice their “political ideals” (Grazingdays, n.d.) through their farming, they also teach younger farmers how to follow one’s politics through farming. Farmers work with SMO to provide education to young farmers for how to connect one’s practices with one’s politics.

Members also engage in advocacy:

I belong to a group in [neighbourhood in the Ottawa valley] and we raise funds. And our group, that’s our sole purpose is raising funds. So we hold events, and I’m instrumental in getting our events green. No more single use plastic, no more throwaway stuff, all this kind of stuff. So they were all on board, so that was my big

thing, to change that around. And we have to take care of the environment because what we do here affects [fundraising target geographic region], affects every other nation. That was my project and I'm very happy to report that everybody's online—onboard with that (M7).

This member draws our attention to our connectedness as people. That what we do here impacts us all. This member also notes that their strategy is rooted in changing their own actions and demonstrating that change to others so that others can follow. This is another instance in which a member notes a connectedness in our actions. What we practice impacts those we may not be near to or see but impacts them all the same. We also see here the interplay between activists, subjectivities, and participation noted by Pungas et al (2022): “self-identified activists are either attracted by gardening communities or the participation in gardening projects itself cultivates activist subjectivities” (129). This relationship between hailing as described by Guthman (2008b): “subjects are constituted through ideology, so that subjectivity is produced when a person recognizes his or her identity in an already existing set of ideas” (1177) and “participation . . . [that] produces . . . subjects” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177) is worth further exploration.

This sense of connection and sense of responsibility for how our actions impact the lives of others runs counter to the individualized discourses associated with neoliberal governmentality. These are further examples of “an identity embedded in local circumstance and a role in the global dialogue” (Osterweil, 2004, 113). Both members and farmers are knitting together the local with the global. This sense of connection is echoed by farmers who noted, during the climate strikes in 2019, that “we all live here” (Roots and Shoots Farm, n.d.). Farmers noted that “There are so many ways to work for the world you want to see, and we were reminded today that each person can create that future through their own lives, work, and actions” (Ferre Agricola, n.d.). This is a call to action, both individual, each person, and collective, through the climate strikes. “Putting action to our words” is necessary to address the climate crisis we are in

– these actions include “put(ing) their bodies on the street, lead(ing) by example, and show(ing) those people in power” that we need “broad systemic change” (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). Standing in solidarity with actions such as Youth Rising Climate Action is “an extension of the work we do on yhe (sic) farm” (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). Farmers describe boots-in-the-streets as an extension of how they plant the fields. These farmers say they farm in a particular way because of “ongoing and increasing climate emergency” (Ferme Agricola, n.d.). Moreover, farmers describe a wide variety of practices they see as addressing the climate crisis. There is a call for both diversity in our practices and for ‘all hands on deck’. We see here the connection between farming and resistance by “collectivist political subjects” (Guthman, 2007b, 474) using “long-standing social-movement strategies pursuing state-mandated protections for labor, the environment, and the poor” (Alkon and Guthman, 2017, 12).

Farmers see linking words to actions as essential. These farmers, again, echo the sentiment of their peers, “what we do on our farm is informed by our commitment to sustainability” (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). These farmers are activist citizens who “engage in practices that help make the unthought-of thinkable and the undoable routine (Carolan, 2017, 198-199). Farmers are also critical about the effectiveness of individualized versus collective political efforts. There is reflection about which practices will lead us where we need to go. This critical reflection informs their practices:

So, I’m on the board of our local chapter for the National Farmers Union. And that’s a—that’s a group that is a collective of famers that are, you know, actively changing or advocating for different policies that help family farms in Canada, but in Ontario and in Ottawa as well. So, you know like, a great example being that, you know, those monthly meetings and those meetings are often far away, and I drive my vehicle. And I have, you know—I pollute to get there. But the purpose of the meeting is that we could then have a greater impact on the landscape of agriculture in Canada. And for me, those issues are really extremely important. And I think we’ll really in a crisis state when it comes to—to young farmers and new farmers, and regenerative farming, and

how we're supporting agriculture in Canada, that—it's really worth it for me to be involved and to expand my energy in that way, to have a greater impact (F6).

Farmers reflect on which of their practices have the most impact – for example, attending a meeting of the NFU is more valuable than saving the gas to get there. Farmers call for diverse strategies to address the climate crisis, including farming practices, food procurement practices, advocacy practices, and protest practices. The diversity of strategies that farmers and members engage in span protests, as well as activism, and practices that Guthman (2008b) classifies as “everyday food activism [that] incorporates neoliberal characteristics” (1172). Farmers and members demonstrate through their practices - the way “bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood” (Yates, 2015, 238, citing Andreas Reckwitz, 2002, 250) - that to tackle environmental challenges, we need diversity in our strategies. We see that farmers farm their politics, but they also participate in the conventional boots-in-the-streets protest. Members too, laced up their boots for these protests as well as engaging in SMO-based activism. These practices of protest and activism do suggest that there is “something deeper going on about contemporary subject-making” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177) but it is not producing subjects who “employ market rationales in their day-to-day behaviour” (Guthman, 2008b, 1173). In fact, there is critique of the discourses Guthman (2008b) contends are being reproduced in these spaces – individualized solutions are sacrificed for collective endeavours.

The relationality that arises from and undergirds CSA participation contributes to a sense of community and connection. This rejection of the anonymization of neoliberalism informs the market transaction dimension of the relationship. This sense of connection mediates the support for prefigurative practices, farming practices, and undergirds the discursive coherence around environmental stewardship. Environmental stewards, as understood by farmers and members,

employ a diverse range of practices to combat environmental destruction. These practices are informed by a sense of connection. This connection supports and informs prefigurative practices, consumption practices, farming practices, as well as advocacy and boots-in-the-streets.

### Discourse and subjects

The second striking observation from immersion in the practices and writing of CSA members and farmers is their active role in the creation of discourse and how farmers and members co-produce discourse together. Both farmers and members are practicing and talking-writing ways of being a human into existence; we see “play and interplay (Smith, 1990a, 203). The co-production of discourse by farmers and members demonstrates that people are, in fact, “living manifestation(s) of action and intention” (Young, 1980, 154). Exploring discourse at play in CSA allows us to examine “our collective imaginaries of what kinds of changes can be brought about and through what means” (Alkon and Guthman, 2017, 15, quoting Guthman 2008 *Bringing Good Food to Others*). Does CSA limit “what is thinkable and hence actable” (Guthman, 2008c, 1241)? Discourses at play in CSA spaces indicate that neoliberalism may constrain but not prevent or completely determine local food projects (Allen, 2010, 298).

### *Parenting, the original subject-making*

Parenting is the original subject-making. Parents are actively involved in providing embodied experiential learning opportunities for their children to become engaged in the food system as critical, reflective stewards with epistemological strategies they can deploy to human in a way that is good for themselves and the earth:

it was really just that the idea of modeling. That, you know, we have to—if we want our kids do keep doing this, then we have to make sure we're doing it. And even if it's hard, find a way. Because... because that way, then it will be part of who they are. To buy from local—you know, local farmers and to buy products—produce that—you know, that, there's—the chemicals are not used in the same way they are on other farms. And so, that was—that idea of showing them the way that this is a good—a good practice (M20).

Parenting and childhood learning about food are both embodied – not only must the children participate but the parents, too. This embodied experience is meant to ensure that these practices



and the beliefs that undergird them, become “a part of who they are” (M20) – this is subject making. This parent demonstrates an awareness of the importance of “practiced bodies” (Foucault, 1995, 137-138). They are demonstrating through their parenting practices ““that the sources of changed behavior lie in the development of practices themselves”” (Carolan, 2017, 202, citing Warde, 2005, 140). I got asked in an interview what my kids thought of our food practices. I responded that for them, this is their normal, this is ‘how you human’. It was a spontaneous explanation that gets at the heart of subject-making and parenting. Parenting is teaching children how to be a person, what roles are available, and how one embodies or performs those roles. Parents in CSA are actively involved in subject-making. We learn “how to human” as children. Parenting is teaching the conduct of conduct; these parents are actively intervening in the discourses their children are being exposed to for the express purpose of raising different subjects. Parents understand that practices must be practiced or rehearsed regularly from an early age. Practices must be practiced until they become part of who the children are. These practices are inclusive of epistemological choices; parents want their children to make knowledge-based choices.

Parents engage in these food education practices “for” their kids so that they understand food:

[comes] from the farmer down the road, as opposed to the grocery store . . . that it's a privilege to eat food that's grown locally. And that there's difference between that and the food that comes out of a can, or the food that comes in a refrigerator truck from another part of the world . . . I think it's important for . . . children to grow up knowing that—you know, how food is grown, and what can be grown locally, and what has to come further away. And hopefully, that helps them make environmentally sound choices along the road (M22).

Parents are teaching what can be grown locally and what must come from far away. Parents are establishing the relational dimension of food, that it comes from a farmer – not a truck or a can.

This obscures that a farmer grew the food in a can as well, which anonymizes it. Parents are making visible the labour in food production. Parents explain that understanding local food systems also encompasses making visible the work that is associated with food production. Parents highlight the labour and resources that are required to produce food. Parents cultivate a practice of gratitude for the labour and resources that are necessary for food production. Parents hope to:

to socialize her a little bit about where food comes from and what kind of effort is involved in creating the food, and being grateful to the farmers who are producing the food for us and really sacrificing a lot that the rest of us to have actively chosen not to sacrifice for convenience (M25, M26).

Making visible the work of farming is distinct from a neoliberal framework which invisibilizes food production and food work. The practice of gratitude is relational and not neoliberal. Parents aiming “to socialize her a little bit” (M25, M26) are parents engaged in subject-making.

Parents provide epistemological training about how to source knowledge, how to be aware of the limits of knowledge, how to discuss acquired knowledge critically, and how to maintain mindfulness about participation in sourcing and consuming food. This is distinct from a neoliberal epistemology. This parent explains how they incorporate epistemological training into dinner discussions:

all of the farms where we buy things from, we've gone to see. And we've met the farmers and we talked to them . . . I will still go buy bacon sometimes and then I'll, we'll have a discussion at our table about “You know what? This was actually like just kind of grocery store bacon and you know, we don't know much about how this pig was raised.” And you know, we have these kind of conversations. Because I just, I think it's good to be, I guess, I just think it's good to be mindful . . . to know what they're eating and make decisions based on knowledge (M23).

This parent is involving her children in epistemological training that reminds them to practice asking questions and to practice acknowledging the gaps in our understanding. This is an example of how “Women’s work and activities are an integral part of the overall organization of

these relations . . . Women are not just the passive products of socialization; they are active; they create themselves” (Smith, 1990a, 161).

Members identified their teenage and adult children as motivating their choices. This member found their adult daughter helped shift their practices:

Over the last couple of years, we've been gradually shifting to a healthier eating style. And [Adult Daughter's name] said, “Well, why don't you try the CSA?” You know, we were doing farmers' markets. And you know. We were just moving direction. And she says, “Why don't you do this?” So, I looked him up, and found him, and contacted him. And we got set up. And we go every two weeks to pick up our vegetables (M19).

Another member noted the role that her mother played in forming her current practices (M20).

Of note here is that as adults, CSA members note the role of their own parents in shaping how they view food and now model practices for their own children. We get to see both the “input” and “output” of these modeling practices and inter-generational knowledge transfer. Shifting food procurement practices takes time and involves an iterative process. Critical reflection plays a role in informing these practices. That is, people do not emerge with fully formed views and a selection of practices fully formed. They are active in their involvement in an ongoing, iterative process. These are longer timelines, from childhood to having your own kids.

These parents are imparting social and political understandings alongside the fresh vegetables, including teaching their children how to be good environmental stewards. For these parents, good environmental stewards seek out local farms that do not use chemicals, are aware of their privilege, practice gratitude and mindfulness, understand how food is grown, understand the food cycle, understand what can be sourced locally, have an awareness of the labour involved in food production, are critical about their knowledge sources as well as their own knowledge. This training is embodied subject formation.

*Choose your subject*


Choice is deployed in CSA in ways that illustrate that discourse is most definitely shaped by neoliberal messaging, but it is not constrained by it. What are the desirable qualities one must choose? Defining the desirable qualities is a dimension of social media postings by farmers:

Make every day Earth Day by making thoughtful choices with your food dollars. Choose to buy produce that is grown organically, grown with the season, travels few miles from farm to plate, and is part of a system that regenerates our soil, cleans our water, freshens our air, protects our pollinators, and utilizes the full extent of our natural resources (Pete's Greens, n.d.). [ID: Collage of three pictures, farmer in field, sign for fresh, local tomatoes, and sunflowers].

When I read thoughtful, I am curious who is doing the thinking that makes the choices thoughtful? Is the person growing the food being thoughtful? Is the person eating the food being thoughtful? There is an invocation of choice here, of course. But the choice is not to choose thoughtfully, it's to choose us because we have been thoughtful, so you don't have to be. Choice in this respect is to choose the people who are protecting bees. The evocation of neoliberal values is strong with 'food dollars' but even more so with choice. These choices are complex and the 'choose us' messaging belies the complexity of these choices. These choices are more complex than the choices one must make to order a coffee, for example.

This post (below) by Rootedoakfarm defines some of the roles in the food system – ecological farmers, eaters, climate change warriors – and what practices these roles should take on to move away from an “unsustainable food system” (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). A farmer “practices regenerative agriculture” and uses “practices that leave the soil better” (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). Eaters can engage in practices that have a “positive effect on the environment” and the first practice is to choose a farmer based on their farming practices (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). Rootedoakfarm is also linking the “connection to where your food comes from” with supporting

a movement (n.d.). We see choice here juxtaposed with connection to your food and to a movement:

As ecological farmers we are proud to be doing our part to save this planet we all call home. We strive to use practices that leave the soil better than we found it and take our stewardship of the land seriously. As an eater you can make choices that have a positive effect on the environment; you can choose to buy food from a farmer who practices regenerative agriculture, to buy local food, and eat seasonally. Every step towards a local farmer is a step away from an unsustainable food system and by deepening your connection to where your food comes from you are supporting a movement of like-minded people that are climate change warriors. #FightBack #EarthDay2019 #EarthDayOttawa  (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). [ID: Picture of 2 M farmers in front of a greenhouse, a farm dog, and a picture of a worm in a hand.]

Both Pete's Greens' and Nikki & Steward's posts evoke choice. Choice is embedded in "practices that leave the soil better" and "supporting a movement of like-minded people" (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). – these like-minded people who have made thoughtful choices to protect the soil in their farming practices. There are certainly discourses of choice in CSA, but these are alongside discourses that celebrate both environmental and protest or movement centred practices – "climate change warriors" (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.). Does this economic support of people who are protecting the soil in their practices constitute a reinscription of neoliberalism? Insofar as choice serves as a "means of regulation" (Guthman, 2008b, 1172), yes. However, choice here can also be read as "a means to an end, a tactic for engagement with market forces" (Andrée, Ballamingie, & Sinclair-Waters, 2015, 1466), an example of how neoliberalism may constrain or influence but does not prevent or completely determine local food projects (Allen, 2010, 298). We see here also that "the relation between discourse and local practices is not causal. Rather, [farmers] . . . are active, skilled, make choices, consider, are not fooled or foolish. Within discourse there is play and interplay" (Smith, 1990a, 203). This evocation of choice represents "a mode which guides actors' thinking and writing" (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 197), "commensurate with some neoliberal tendencies, but it is not rooted in them" (Andrée,

Ballamingie, & Sinclair-Waters, 2015, 1466). We can see how both Pete's Greens and Nikki & Stuart have modified the discourse of choice "in the social relations provided by his or her particular material situation" (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 197) linking choice to consumption practices, provision of support for farmers engaging in environmentally friendly practices, and collective action by "supporting a system that regenerates our soil" thereby extending the punctuated observation of Earth Day to be inclusive of everyday practices (Pete's Greens) and supporting "a movement of like-minded people who are climate change warriors" (Nikki & Stuart). There is a reflection here on the inadequacy of punctuated protests – that we need both daily practice and protest to prefigure our environmental future. This practice of reflection, alongside conceptualization, constitute "socially organized and organizing practices" (Smith, 1990a, 10). The iterative nature of the practices being encouraged – "every step towards a local farmer" (Nikki & Stuart, n.d.) is also a dimension of these posts, that you take one step at a time in the direction you want to go, and simultaneously away from an undesirable future. Choice shapes the messaging from farmers but does not constrain them discursively.

*Labour conditions and co-production of discourse*

Farmers and members are active in the shaping of labour discourses. Notable that farms that had messaging around labour practices had members who mentioned labour practices in their interviews (M20, M13, M24, M25, M26, M6, M7, M9, & Copy of Text From Instagram Posts, 2020, 40 & 72). Farmers play an active role in shaping how their members understand the macroeconomic situation that farms must negotiate to survive:

[the social media posts] talking about worker rights . . . making sure people are paid a fair wage, and that kind of thing. And that was important to us, that that played into the role of the CSA. Knowing that the people that are working at the farm, from what we understood, [Name of Farm] is paying them well enough. Like, a good wage . . . whatever type of labour, that it's worth something . . . anything related to food is worth a lot. Because we need food to survive (M20)

Fair wages for agricultural workers are a motivation for CSA participation mentioned by both farmers and members. While many of the farmers interviewed mentioned challenges around sustainable labour conditions for farmers, the farms structured as cooperatives that also had labour conditions related messaging in their social media posts had members who critically discussed the importance of creating sustainable labour conditions for farmers. These farmers are activist citizens:

Activist citizens, conversely, are interested in challenging routine, understandings, and practices, which makes theirs a political project versus politics as usual . . . such projects may not immediately reorder the state, they have the potential to bring about social change by challenging convention . . . Activist citizens engage in practices that help make the unthought-of thinkable and the undoable routine (Carolan, 2017, 198-199).

Farmers that work the land are among those most impacted by labour conditions on farms. Indeed, it is the labour conditions that they experience themselves at work. Farmers expressed a desire “to create a business that reflected our values. Both in terms of like labour conditions but also environmental values” (F9). Farmers are the “experts who are part of a

*group* and who express the *group's* standpoint" on labour conditions for farmers (Hill Collins, 1989, 750, emphasis added). These farmers are the "authoritative speakers of [their] experience" (Smith, 1990b, 28). This farmer identifies as a goal a business that engages in economic activity with a moral compass. This sounds like using a "market mechanism to solve problems" (Guthman, 2008b, 1177), however, I would argue this assessment must be tempered with an acknowledgement of the co-operative structures put in place by these farmers. The cooperative structure and the insistence on a business with values are emblematic of:

already existing discourses of the community economy and a range of existing practices of community economic development . . . In all these movements, economic decisions (about prices of goods, wage levels, bonus payments, reinvestment strategies, sale of stock, and so forth) are made in the light of ethical discussions conducted within various communities. In some cases, these communities are geographically confined to the "local," while in others, they span the "global" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 80).

There are market mechanisms, alongside organizational mechanisms provided by the co-op structure, as well as SMO-based advocacy via the National Farmers Union. Entrepreneurial characteristics shaped by neoliberal discourses exist alongside and in addition to, social movement practices. This is more than "politics via markets" (Guthman, 2008b, 1171). This is another example that the "the practices of the CSA require subjectivation forms, which differ from bourgeois-capitalist social forms" (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 419).

Despite the acknowledgement that these farms are businesses, there is a reluctance to discuss the necessity of making money:

sustainability around farming has to do with also being able to make money. Like, and I don't mean that in a greedy way. I just mean, like... it's like any business. Like if you like a business, and you want to keep doing it, it's like you do have to be able to put bread on the table. And I just feel like my parents certainly weren't really doing a good job of that" (F2).



I note the “I don’t mean that in a greedy way” (F2). Juxtaposed with the profit margins of major grocery store chains, farmers are in an odd position. Farmers interviewed explained the challenges of an industry with very low profit margins (F4, F8), very low wages, and poor labour conditions (F2). This aligns with the findings of the evaluative literature on CSA: “CSA farmers earn more farm income than other farms across the United States on average, [yet] they still earn far below the median national income and generally fail to earn a living wage” (Paul, 2019, 162). These same farmers are being held up as examples of reinscription of neoliberalism when they are amongst those most impacted by neoliberalism. These farmers have identified the structures that are problematic, and they are changing the structures of their own farms to address those problematic elements, as well as participating in SMOs to address these issues in the broader industry.

Members are also attentive to these pressures noting: “You hear terrible things about some labor practices for migrant workers and things like that who work on farms—big farms in Canada” (M24). Members observed: “the unhealthy, sort of, macroeconomic situation relative to agriculture and food issues and the massive subsidization of large corporations and so forth and expectation of low cost of food amongst consumers and, oh my God” (M2). This naming and identifying of the structures that create these poor labour conditions was done by both farmers and members. Members understand that there is a connection between the labour conditions on farms and the “macroeconomic situation relative to agriculture and food issues” (M2). This is a “politics that names and addresses actually existing neoliberalizations of the food system” (Guthman, 2008b, 1180).

Members connect shopping local and providing direct financial support for farms with the labour practices at those farms. Members and farmers are connecting the dots between the

economic system in which we operate and their own material conditions. Members and farmers are using their understanding of the connection between the macroeconomic system and the individual experience of farmers to inform the practices they see as most appropriate for improving the lives of farmers and farm workers. Members and farmers are connecting concepts that have been siloed by capitalism and using the understanding of this connection to explain the importance of their practices.

Members also make the connection between the economic status of their communities and the economic status of their farmers (M1). Direct financial support for farmers is seen as a way of supporting local economies. Members explain the link between their support of local farmers, by shopping local and providing financial support that benefits farmers directly, with keeping farmers in the community and food security. Members are explicit that the support they provide to farmers is financial and economic: “guaranteed that they have that income” (M23), or “helping local farmers” (M9), or “they have to make a living as well. So, I don’t mind paying extra for that because, you know, they have families, they have to feed their kids” (M7).

I am drawn to two thoughts here – that both members and farmers are explicit that this is an economic relationship, and that help, or support, is money. In understanding this, I may not “rewrite the other's world or impose upon it a conceptual framework that extracts from it what fits with ours. Their reality, their varieties of experience, must be an unconditional datum” (Smith, 1990b, 25). These are economic relations. Yet, they exceed economic relations as defined by neoliberalism. There is no hiding the economic nature of the relationship, rather, the economic relations are that which allows the re-embedding of these market transactions. The second thought is that these members are explicit that the system currently in use does not provide farmers with enough income to keep them in the industry and to allow them to provide

for their families. Members note that mainstream food procurement options such as grocery stores and their suppliers have “questionable labour practices” (M24). One member observes that “anything related to food is worth a lot. Because we need food to survive” and that it is important to them that their farmers, or the farm workers, are getting “a good wage” (M20).

There is commentary here on how and what our current economic system values – our current economic system does not value the labour of farm workers and exploits them by paying low wages. While there is a consensus that our current economic system does not work, the solution is fair wages within the economic system. While this wage-based solution might read as a tacit acceptance of the economic system, support for local farmers is understood to be a step away from a profit-driven system or “the great big agricultural machine” which has the goal of profit (M18). Thus, with respect to the labour conditions on farms, the farmers and members are engaged in practices that name “actually existing neoliberalizations of the food system” (Guthman, 2008a, 1180). Whether these practices meet Guthman’s benchmark for addressing the “actually existing neoliberalizations of the food system” (Guthman, 2008a, 1180) is another question. Yet, for those who experience the “effects of the ‘relations of ruling’” (Satka and Skehill, 2011, 196), these are the material practices felt to be most relevant. The salience of environmental discourses in CSA spaces are far more developed than labour discourses. This salience is evident in the environmental themes visible in the Climate Strikes in 2019. Labour discourses are less developed. Can they be pushed further? Can they be translated into protests? What practices are required to reach that critical mass?

*Parenting and farming: pushing new discourses into the fray*

The co-production of discourses around labour made me curious about the emergence of newer and less developed discourses. Also, notable is how farming parents engage with the roles that neoliberalism offers. Given the role parenting plays in how some members experience CSA, I am curious to see how this messaging evolves.

Farm mamas: how has your relationship to farming changed since you had kids? What struggles and challenges have you faced? What beauty and joy have you discovered? . . . Every summer is a recalibration as he grows and the farm grows. Being a mom and a farmer feels at times deeply gratifying and other times near impossible . . . (Katie Spring, n.d.) [ID: Female farmer operating a scythe while babywearing a child on her back].

This sense of recalibration resonated deeply with me. The “missing moments in the transformative process are well understood by [me as] the practitioner of the discourse of femininity” (Smith, 1990a, 198). This post illustrates negotiating both productive and reproductive labour simultaneously. This is coping from inside the confines of neoliberalism. I am also drawn to the beauty, joy, and gratification, and the image of a female farmer operating a scythe while babywearing, or as Smith has described it, “pleasure in the exercise of competence” (1990a, 206). There is a blurring of the lines between parenting and farming, which has been mentioned by both male and female parents. There is a lot of joy but also a feeling of “near impossible”. There is tension between productive and reproductive labour, not only are these farmers making visible their reproductive labour, something neoliberalism obscures, they are also highlighting the tension between farm work and family work. There is also tension – between the impossibility of juggling an infinite list of demands, and these moments of balance when all the plates spin and you can feel the sun on your face. Relishing the hard work of balancing competing demands alongside the tension between the ‘personal’ and ‘productive’. The personal and productive are held in opposition to each other – in conflict. Under

neoliberalism, this conflict should get negotiated at an individual level. In this instance, on social media, these private and personal struggles have been hurled back into the arena of public discourse, dissolving the individualism of neoliberalism. Another farmer and parent wonders:

Is there such thing as a balanced life for a farm-family? I have many musings. For now I realize what it means for me personally- I am no longer willing to be a full-time farmer. It would have been easy for me to not say anything about this personal evolution. Our farm is still going to do its' thing, and I'll be parenting most of the time. But if I am honest- it is important to me to let others know that this is a choice I've made for myself. If I wanted to be most productive for my farm I could put my child in childcare and work on the farm more. But that would not be right for me . . . ("Occasional Farmer") Bethany (Zócalo Community Farm, n.d.). [ID: Picture of a farm stand].

Neoliberalism demands, or rather offers, choice. This farmer-parent is navigating the choice – between being the most “productive” for one’s farm, ostensibly prioritizing their economic role, and parenting (Zócalo Community Farm, n.d.). This farmer’s musings push back against productivity discourses, noting that to achieve a balanced life, one needs to withdraw from participation in the economy. This post also creates a dichotomy between being a good neoliberal subject and parenting – one can be a good economic subject or a good parent – that can be contrasted with the impossibility and joy of keeping both plates spinning in the first post. Both farming parents are making visible the work of parenting – the children are not in another location; they are with their working parents, in the thick of farming. This creates extra labour – balancing productive and reproductive labour requires a great deal of work. Farmer parents reflect on the impossibility of farming and of parenting, and of doing both, under neoliberalism. Given the point of entry parenting provides into CSA participation for members, and the co-production of labour discourses in CSA spaces, I am curious whether this messaging around parenting and farming will find purchase amongst members. There is a small but growing shift in the gendered demographics of farming with the number of female operators increasing (25.7

percent in 1991, 27.4 percent in 2011, 28.7 percent in 2016) (Statistics Canada, 2017a). Wilson (2022) has observed challenges for female farming in terms of family planning, childcare, and motherhood (37-39). In interviews, parent farmers of both sexes noted the challenges and joys of parenting, but I observed more social media posts from female farmers on parenting while farming. What subjects will be discursively available to parent-farmers in the years to come? In the same way that labour activism in CSA spaces is illustrative of an additive approach; that is, entrepreneurial market-based solutions, in addition to organizational solutions, and social movement solutions, as well as discursive engagement, I am curious to see how the binary subjects (neoliberal subject or parent) and solutions (either/or versus impossible juggling) evolve.

*The net and discursive coherence*

What organizes or assembles these practices? I was curious at the start of my research whether CSA practices related to other practices, and, if so, how they were connected. My curiosity originated in my observation of the clustering these practices. Members also observed this clustering of practices in their own lives. Members described the layering of these practices over the years, how practices led to new practices, and how the layering of practices shifted their understanding and their knowledge base. There is an openness to new practices, a sense of exploration, of “maybe we could try that?” (M20). This exploration, this sense of being unfinished, of building the steps to where you want to go is a practice in itself – there is no sense of arrival or having finished this process; rather the work is oriented around a sense of not being there yet, of being unfinished, of being ongoing.

Members noted that the shift in their practices has occurred over a longer time frame: “We definitely are... and have over a period of years tried to definitely reduce waste by recycling and re-using, reducing our consumption” (M10). In addition to the extended timeline, there is a breadth and coherence to the collection of practices that are lifted by this net:

I don't own a car, so I ride my bike pretty much everywhere, and then I take transit in the winter. I [laughs] tend to shop exclusively at secondhand stores or thrift stores. And I... Yeah, I try to reduce my footprint as much as possible; recycle obviously. I'm a part of Ottawa Renewable Energy Co-op . . . I guess I've always kind of been that way . . . it was an easy decision to join [Name of Farm CSA] for, you know—that it's co-op, but also, yeah, they're doing really cool things (M13).

These practices, such as carrying a straw every day, or choosing a neighbourhood to avoid buying a car, require varying degrees of time commitment and with varying degrees of burden - the extra weight in a purse compared to walking or biking every day. Like ethical consumption which operates both at a discursive level "where self-aware, self-conscious choices can be articulated" but also at a routine level (Began et al., 2010, 755-756), these practices span both the

articulated and the routine. Amongst the variety of practices, we see the impacts of these practices that shape how these people move through the world and that these practices require daily engagement. These are not ‘one and done’ practices:

I would say almost every aspect of our life, we try to figure out something we can do . . . I think that we're trying to do the best we can, in a lot of different ways . . . we're always open to new ideas too. So, like, if we see something happening somewhere else, or our friends doing something, we kind of think, ‘Oh! You know, maybe we could try that?’ (M20).

We see here an iterative layering of exploration, practices, problem solving, and knowledge. These are the “micro-processes of everyday routines” (Barnett, 2004, 10) that would constitute a “true Foucauldian usage” of neoliberal governmentality (Guthman, 2008b, 1173). Over time, sustainability practices evolve for many of the members. Members and farmers emphasized change frequently.

One member explains their evolution, starting with a level of “awareness” which precedes any kind of significant change in practices, to “finding a footing” in a particular mindset:

when you become aware of one thing, it's hard not to become aware of other thing. And once you're aware of them, then it's hard to not change some of the things you do . . . things that I could point to? I think becoming, I don't know that I would point towards our experience with CSA directly. A catalyst. But I think that the conversations around CSA and the mindset around it has made it such that we have considered other things in our lives as being increasingly important . . . Is it because we have a CSA, no. But I would say that finding a footing in the mindset that supports what our reasoning behind CSA or behind our supporting agriculture in that way. You know, knowing that that has found a purchase in our lives, encourages us to push ourselves in other areas . . . But I don't know that it's because of CSA. I think it's just all part of the package (M6).

There are overlaps between the practices associated with CSA and these complementary practices. There are multiple dimensions to these practices; many practices are also associated with frugality, simplicity, zero-waste, and sustainability. Reduced transportation (M10, M13, M14, M23, M24, M5), zero waste and the reduction of plastic use (M12, M19), reducing water



consumption by following a plant-based diet (M15), are some of the complementary sustainability practices that members do alongside CSA specific practices. Reduction or avoidance of certain practices is a key theme here. Reducing waste, reducing consumption by purchasing less, less frequently, or secondhand, and reducing gasoline-powered transportation by choosing a different home or changing the mode of transportation. Members explain that CSA does not necessarily move these complementary practices forward. Rather, there is a sense that CSA related practices are part of a larger process of engagement around how to be in the world, how to human. How to human in a way that does less harm and that is more environmentally sustainable. There is an exploration of conduct, of practice, that moves towards a different understanding of humans - rather than being extractivist beings, how can we human without being extractivist. These folks are workshopping ‘subject-making’ – despite the workshopping, there is a sense of orientation, this subject-making is not happening haphazardly. A component of this workshopping is interpretation, “an activity, a practice isolating and differentiating meaning” (Smith, 1990a, 90). They are aiming for a yet-to-be realized future and figuring out how to get there. There is a sense that people need to practice – in the sense of rehearsing - and with increasing levels of proficiency, comes the search for new areas in which one can begin new practices. This iterative layering of practices, interpretation, rehearsal, proficiency, and exploration results in community economy forms that are “populated by a variety of emergent institutions and practices” (Harris, 2009, 60, paraphrasing Gibson-Graham 2006, 54).

For many, the exploration of new practices involves finding ways to avoid certain practices, which demands a mastery of skills and finding alternatives. This net that lifts all practices is knitted together by an attention to and reflection on how one should be in the world. This net expands with new understandings, new practices, and new competencies. There is an

adaptive and reflective quality supporting the expansion, over time, of this net. We see members and farmers reflect on where they have come from in terms of their practices, via the practice of evaluation, and use these reflections to orient new practices. This is an exploration, over time, done both at the individual and collective level, of how to be a human in ways that achieve the desired outcomes. Subject-making is an iterative process. Understandings and reflections recalibrate the orientation of embodied practices over time.

## Conclusion

Participation in CSA cultivates a sense of connection that is supportive of prefigurative practices, farming practices, transitioning to CSA, and activism. The relational dimension of CSA participation supports social movement practices. Thus, participation in CSA seems to be a means for exploring and expanding practices, rooted in connection. Participation is a source of openings rather than one of closure. CSA functions as a model on which future practices can be based (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 419) and as a mechanism for cultivating a sense of community identity (Carolan, 2017, 212). This community resists the “enclosure” required to be “discipline[ed]” into neoliberal governmentality (Foucault, 1995, 141-144).

The collection of prefigurative practices and connection to a community of practice associated with CSA are a type of “decentralized, uncoordinated, and place-based consciousness-raising groups” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, xxiii) that “have an identity embedded in local circumstances and a role in the global dialogue” (Osterweil, 2004, 113). A feminist spatiality reveals the link between these place-based discourses and “the macro-scale processes of social transformation unfolding in multiple and complex spatialities” (Misleh, 2020, 1041). For some members and farmers, their food practices are a form of “resistance to the dominant food systems” (Vuilleumier, 2017, 102). Farmers and members practice in the present the change that they wish to see in the future of food, cultivating political innovation, consistent with new social movement activity (Melucci, 1994, 103, and 1989, 6). The extra-local communication through social media serves as a “laboratory for antagonism and innovation” (Melucci, 1994, 127). Infrapolitics provides discursive infrastructure (Scott, 1990, 184). CSA participation for farmers and members exceeds the discourses associated with neoliberal governmentality through ritualized practices but these discourses reflect the environment in which CSA operates. CSA

spaces provide an incubator for discourses of environmental stewardship and protest practices associated with being a good environmental subject.

Members and farmers are very aware of the pressure to “act in particular ways” in line with neoliberalism (Guthman, 2007b, 466). The economic relations I observed in CSA exceed those of neoliberalism and reflect “non-economic values, normative goals, and alternative practices” (Misleh, 2022, 2031). These economic relations resocialize market transactions and privilege the “local community and its environment” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 80). The subjects that populate CSA spaces “differ from bourgeois-capitalist social forms” (Blättel-Mink et al, 2017, 419). It is only through privileging the perspective of farmers as the “authoritative speakers of [their] experience” (Smith, 1990b, 28), that it is clear that farmers are activist citizens who “engage in practices that help make the unthought-of thinkable and the undoable routine (Carolan, 2017, 198-199). Beyond awareness of the pressure to act in accordance with neoliberal values, members, and farmers name “actually existing neoliberalizations of the food system” (Guthman, 2008a, 1180). It would be inaccurate to describe farmers and members as passive and “unaware of the unequal power relationships obscured by the veil of the commodity fetish” (Goodman and Dupuis, 2002, 7); members and farmers have a rich understanding of the “unhealthy, sort of, macroeconomic situation relative to agriculture and food issues and the massive subsidization of large corporations and so forth and expectation of low cost of food amongst consumers and, oh my God” (M2). If we centre the voice of the subject, we are provided with an opportunity to “explore the ways that the project of governing and subjecting is never complete” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 25 citing O’Malley et al, 1997, 503). CSA farmers and members are not “unaware of what is being done to” them (Foucault, 2007, 105). Are “knowledge and ethical behavior . . . interdependent” (Guthman, 2008b, 1175)? Does

“awareness of the intimacy of food . . . propel one to make reflexive, ethical food decisions” (Guthman, 2008b, 1175)? Perhaps not awareness of food, but awareness food politics and awareness of the macroeconomic situation that food producers, and indeed consumers, find themselves in does seem to lend itself to shifts in practices. There is reflection on the practices that farmers and members engage with. Of note, the discussions around labour conditions seems to arise from awareness of the macroeconomic and local economic situation. This awareness is due, in part, to farmers naming neoliberalisms within the food system and sharing that with members via social media, email, and conversation.

Guthman has effectively captured the pseudo-religious dimension of the food movement: “the extent to which organic, local food has come to be intensely proselytized suggests something deeper going on about contemporary subject-making” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177). The use of proselytized is accurate, although I think “enroll” better captures the education that members receive, and indeed seek, as farmers un-black-box farming for members (Steup et al, 2018, 2). There is also a dynamic beyond enrolling: “self-identified activists are either attracted by . . . [these] communities or the participation . . . itself cultivates activist subjectivities” (Pungas et al, 2022, 129). How “participation . . . produces . . . subjects” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177) is worth further exploration. Does this synergy of values produce subjects who “employ market rationales in their day-to-day behavior”? (Guthman, 2008b, 1173). The members and farmers interviewed, and the commentary from Instagram posts, suggest that there is a rejection of both market rationales and values in the discussions and practices of members and farmers. Guthman is accurate about there being a relationship between practice and subject-making, however, I would argue that the practices associated with CSA participation do not produce “neoliberal subjects” (Guthman, 2008b, 1177 citing Bondi, 2005, Dolhinow, 2005, Larner, 2003,

and Slocum, 2004). A focus on place-based processes reveals the “connection to the macro-scale processes of social transformation unfolding in multiple and complex spatialities” (Misleh, 2020, 1041). Members expressed discomfort with and rejection of neoliberal values, however, there are elements of individualism, for example, in the discussions had by farmers and members about plastics and health. Has participation in CSA limited "our collective imaginaries of what kinds of changes can be brought about and through what means"? (Alkon and Guthman, 2017, 15, quoting Guthman 2008 *Bringing Good Food to Others*). Allen’s understanding of neoliberalism is most applicable here: neoliberalism may constrain but not prevent or completely determine local food projects (2010, 298).

Does participation in CSA reduce resistance by “collectivist political subjects” (2007b, 474) using "long-standing social-movement strategies pursuing state-mandated protections for labor, the environment, and the poor" (Alkon and Guthman, 2017, 12)? A focus on “people’s actual practices and activities” (Smith, 1990a, 7) reveals the presence of both farmers and members in protests during the climate strikes in 2019 and Youth Rising Climate Action, as well as in SMO (social movement organizations) such as Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO), National Farmers Union, National Farmers Union – Ontario, and the organizations that members participate in. These observations suggest that social movement strategies are part of the practices related to CSA participation. Members and farmers discussed their sense of connection to collectives that are making changes and demonstrated that connection by participating jointly in advocacy, activism, and philanthropy. Indeed, the connection between participation in CSA and these other forms of activism and protest warrants further study. What exactly are members enrolling in when they sign up for CSA? They get more than vegetables, fruit, maple syrup, and meat.

Guthman bemoans food politics because “it is precisely the undue emphasis on creating minor alternative food institutions that has made agro-food politics so anemic at times” (2008a, 1181). I did not witness that same anemia during my research. Guthman’s attempt to “theorize how projects in opposition to neoliberalizations of the food and agricultural sectors seem to produce and reproduce neoliberal forms, spaces of governance, and mentalities” (Guthman, 2008b, 1171) was deployed at a scale at which the richness of practice and discourse is not visible. Attention to “people’s actual practices and activities” (Smith, 1990a, 7) illuminates both infrapolitics and involvement in social movement organizations, advocacy, and activism. Attentiveness to these microprocesses and everyday practices reveals an iterative layering of practices, interpretation, rehearsal, proficiency, and exploration. The interplay between these various practices results in community economy forms that are “populated by a variety of emergent institutions and practices (paraphrasing Gibson-Graham 2006, 54)” (Harris, 2009, 60). Subject-formation for those within CSA spaces, farmers and members, is richer and more complex than is visible from a systems overview. This richness demands, as Guthman herself suggests, a shift our methodological approach: “these politics must be seen dialectically, with an eye toward the openings they produce as well as the closures” (Guthman, 2008b, 1172). There are openings, changes, and spaces created by CSA participation that are generative and shift the material reality both for participants, and the land that is farmed. These openings and the subjects created by them warrant further study if we are to “restructure the way food is produced, distributed, and consumed” (Guthman, 2008b, 1180) at a global scale.

## Works Cited

- Alkon, A., & Guthman, J. (Eds.). (2017). *The new food activism: Opposition, cooperation, and collective action*. Univ of California Press.
- Allen, P., & Guthman, J. (2006). From “old school” to “farm-to-school”: Neoliberalization from the ground up. *Agriculture and human values*, 23(4), 401-415.
- Allen, P., Simmons, M., Goodman, M., & Warner, K. (2003). Shifting plates in the agrifood landscape: the tectonics of alternative agrifood initiatives in California. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19, 61-75.
- Allen, P. (2010). Realizing justice in local food systems. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 3(2), 295-308.
- Andersen, J. G., & Tobiasen, M. (2009). Who are these political consumers anyway? Survey evidence from Denmark. *Politics, products, and markets: Exploring political consumerism past and present* (pp. 203-222). Transaction Publishers.
- Andrée, P., Ballamingie, P., & Sinclair-Waters, B. (2015). Neoliberalism and the making of food politics in eastern ontario. *Local Environment*, 20(12), 1452.
- Andrée, P., Ayres, J., Bosia, M. J., & Mássicotte, M. J. (2014) "Food Sovereignty and Globalization: Lines of Inquiry" in P. Andrée, J. Ayres, M. J. Bosia, & M. J. Mássicotte (Eds.). (2014). *Globalization and food sovereignty: Global and local change in the new politics of food* (Vol. 42). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Barnett, C. (2005). The consolations of ‘neoliberalism’. *Geoforum*, 36(1), 7-12.
- Blättel-Mink, B., Boddenberg, M., Gunkel, L., Schmitz, S., & Vaessen, F. (2017). Beyond the market—New practices of supply in times of crisis: The example community-supported agriculture. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 41(4), 415–421.
- Baumann, S., Johnston, J., & Oleschuk, M. (2023). How do producers imagine consumers? Connecting farm and fork through a cultural repertoire of consumer sovereignty. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 63(1), 178-199.
- Beagan, B. L., Ristovski-Slijepcevic, S., & Chapman, G. E. (2010). ‘People Are Just Becoming More Conscious of How Everything’s Connected’: ‘Ethical’ Food Consumption in Two Regions of Canada. *Sociology*, 44(4), 751-769.
- Blue, G. (2010). Food, publics, science. *Public Understanding of Science*, 19(2), 147-154.
- Butler, J. (1997). *The psychic life of power: Theories in subjection*. Stanford University Press.



- Carroll, W. K. (2010). 'You are here': An interview with Dorothy E. Smith. *Socialist Studies/Études Socialistes*.
- Carolan, M. (2017). More-than-active food citizens: A longitudinal and comparative study of alternative and conventional eaters. *Rural Sociology*, 82(2), 197-225.
- Chiffolleau, Y. (2009). From politics to co-operation: The dynamics of embeddedness in alternative food supply chains. *Sociologia ruralis*, 49(3), 218-235.
- Community Supported Agriculture Australia and New Zealand. Directory. (2023 December 7). <http://www.csanetworkausnz.org/directory.html>
- Collins, P. H. (1989). The social construction of black feminist thought. *Signs*, 745-773.
- Dauvergne, P., & LeBaron, G. (2014). *Protest Inc.: The corporatization of activism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Della Porta, D., & Tarrow, S. (Eds.). (2005). *Transnational protest and global activism*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Desmarais, A. A., & Wittman, H. (2014). Farmers, foodies and First Nations: getting to food sovereignty in Canada. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 41(6), 1153-1173.
- Drost, P. (2023). Federal plastics ban creates 'unintended consequences' for compostable alternatives. CBC Radio. <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/costofliving/federal-plastic-ban-compostable-1.6723337>
- Dubuisson-Quellier, S. (2015). From targets to recruits: the status of consumers within the political consumption movement. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 39(5), 404-412.
- Dunn, B. (2017). Against neoliberalism as a concept. *Capital & Class*, 41(3), 435-454.
- DuPuis, E. M. (2002). *Nature's perfect food: How milk became America's drink*. NYU Press.
- European CSA Research Group (2016). Overview of community supported agriculture in Europe. <http://urgenci.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Overview-of-Community-Supported-Agriculture-in-Europe.pdf>.
- Feenstra, G. (2002). Creating space for sustainable food systems: Lessons from the field. *Agriculture and human values*, 19(2), 99-106.
- Ferree, M. M., & Hess, B. (2000). *Controversy and coalition: The new feminist movement across four decades of change*. New York, NY: Routledge.

- Fernandes-Jesus, M., Lima, M. L., & Sabucedo, J. M. (2018). Changing identities to change the world: Identity motives in lifestyle politics and its link to collective action. *Political Psychology*, 39(5), 1031-1047.
- Fernando, J. (2020). The Virocene Epoch: the vulnerability nexus of viruses, capitalism and racism. *Journal of Political Ecology*, 27(1), 635.
- Fitzmaurice, C. J., Ladegaard, I., Attwood-Charles, W., Cansoy, M., Carfagna, L. B., Schor, J. B., & Wengronowitz, R. (2020). Domesticating the market: moral exchange and the sharing economy. *Socio-Economic Review*, 18(1), 81-102.
- Forssell, S., & Lankoski, L. (2015). The sustainability promise of alternative food networks: an examination through “alternative” characteristics. *Agriculture and human values*, 32, 63-75.
- Foucault, M. (1983). “Afterword.” In H. L. Dreyfus, & P. Rabinow (eds). *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. University of Chicago Press (pp. 208-252).
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: the birth of a prison*. London, Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2007). *Security, territory, population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978* (G. Burchell, Trans.; M. Snellart, Ed.). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-1979* (G. Burchell, Trans.; M. Snellart, Ed.). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Galt, R. E., Bradley, K., Christensen, L. O., & Munden-Dixon, K. (2019). The (un)making of “CSA people”: Member retention and the customization paradox in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in California. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 65, 172–185.
- Gerber, J. F. (2020). Degrowth and critical agrarian studies. *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 47(2), 235-264.
- Gibb, N., & Wittman, H. (2013). Parallel alternatives: Chinese-Canadian farmers and the metro Vancouver local food movement. *Local Environment*, 18(1), 1-19. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/10.1080/13549839.2012.714763>
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2006). *A postcapitalist politics*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2008). Diverse economies: performative practices for other worlds'. *Progress in human geography*, 32(5), 613-632.
- Gram, M. (2010). Self-reporting vs. observation: some cautionary examples from parent/child food shopping behaviour. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 34(4), 394-399.

- Grey, S., & Patel, R. (2015). Food sovereignty as decolonization: some contributions from Indigenous movements to food system and development politics. *Agriculture and human values*, 32(3), 431-444.
- Goodman, D., & DuPuis, E. M. (2002). Knowing food and growing food: beyond the production–consumption debate in the sociology of agriculture. *Sociologia ruralis*, 42(1), 5-22.
- Goodwin, J. & Jasper, J. (Eds) (2004). *Rethinking social movements: Structure, meaning, and emotion*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Guthman, J. (2004). Back to the land: the paradox of organic food standards. *Environment and planning A*, 36(3), 511-528.
- Guthman, J. (2007a). Commentary on teaching food: Why I am fed up with Michael Pollan et al. *Agriculture and human values*, 24(2), 261-264.
- Guthman, J. (2007b). The Polanyian way? Voluntary food labels as neoliberal governance. *Antipode*, 39(3), 456-478.
- Guthman, J. (2008a). Bringing good food to others: Investigating the subjects of alternative food practice. *Cultural geographies*, 15(4), 431-447.
- Guthman, J. (2008b). Neoliberalism and the making of food politics in California. *Geoforum*, 39(3), 1171-1183.
- Guthman, J. (2008c). Thinking inside the neoliberal box: The micro-politics of agro-food philanthropy. *Geoforum*, 39(3), 1241-1253.
- Guthman, J. (2014). *Agrarian dreams*. University of California Press.
- Guthman, J., Morris, A. W., & Allen, P. (2006). Squaring farm security and food security in two types of alternative food institutions. *Rural sociology*, 71(4), 662-684.
- Hassanein, N. (2003). Practicing food democracy: a pragmatic politics of transformation. *Journal of rural studies*, 19(1), 77-86.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Halkier, B., & Holm, L. (2008). Food consumption and political agency: on concerns and practices among Danish consumers. *International journal of consumer studies*, 32(6), 667-674.
- Halkier, B., Micheletti, M., Follesdal, A., & Stolle, D. (2009). Consumption, risk, and civic engagement: Citizens as risk-handlers. *Politics, Products, and Markets: Exploring Political Consumerism*. Transaction Publishers, 223-244.

- Harris, E. (2009). Neoliberal subjectivities or a politics of the possible? Reading for difference in alternative food networks. *Area*, 41(1), 55-63.
- Haenfler, R., Johnson, B., & Jones, E. (2012). Lifestyle movements: Exploring the intersection of lifestyle and social movements. *Social Movement Studies*, 11(1), 1-20.
- Haydu, J., & Kadanoff, D. (2010). Casing political consumerism. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 15(2), 159-177.
- Heynen, N., McCarthy, J., Prudham, S., & Robbins, P. (Eds.). (2007). *Neoliberal environments: false promises and unnatural consequences*. New York: Routledge.
- Hitchman, J. (2015). Community supported agriculture thriving in China. *ILEIA, Center for Learning on Sustainable Agriculture*. [Link](#).
- Hunt, S. A., Benford, R. D., & Snow, D. A. (1994). Identity fields: Framing processes and the social construction of movement identities. in Larana, E., Johnston, H., & Gusfield, J. R. (eds). *New social movements: From ideology to identity*, 185-208. Temple University Press.
- Jensen, H.R. (1998), "A Profile of the Political Consumer", in *AP - Asia Pacific Advances in Consumer Research Volume 3*, eds. Kineta Hung and Kent B. Monroe, Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 126-130.
- Jessop, B. (2013). Putting neoliberalism in its time and place: a response to the debate. *Social Anthropology*, 21(1), 65-74.
- Johnston, J. (2008). The citizen-consumer hybrid: ideological tensions and the case of Whole Foods Market. *Theory and Society*, 37(3), 229-270.
- Johnston, J., & Baumann, S. (2014). *Foodies: Democracy and distinction in the gourmet foodscape*. Routledge.
- Koensler, A. (2020). Prefigurative politics in practice: concrete utopias in Italy's food sovereignty activism. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 25(1), 133-150.
- Lamine, C. (2005). Settling shared uncertainties: local partnerships between producers and consumers. *Sociologia ruralis*, 45(4), 324-345.
- Lamine, C. (2015). Sustainability and resilience in agrifood systems: Reconnecting agriculture, food and the environment. *Sociologia ruralis*, 55(1), 41-61.
- Leverenz, D., Moussawel, S., Maurer, C., Hafner, G., Schneider, F., Schmidt, T., & Kranert, M. (2019). Quantifying the prevention potential of avoidable food waste in households using a self-reporting approach. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 150, 104417.

- Lockie, S., & Kitto, S. (2000). Beyond the farm gate: production-consumption networks and agri-food research. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 40(1), 3-19.
- Lockie, S., K. Lyons and G. Lawrence (2000) 'Constructing "Green" Foods: Corporate Capital, Risk, and Organic Farming in Australia and New Zealand', *Agriculture and Human Values* 17: 315–22.
- Mars, M. M. (2022). Community and Cultural Entrepreneurship and Value Co-Creation in the Local Food Marketscape. *Sustainability*, 14(24), 16744.
- Martin, S. J., & Andrée, P. (2017). Putting food sovereignty to work: Civil society governmentalities and Canada's people's food policy project (2008-2011). *Journal of Civil Society*, 13(4), 374-391.
- Matzembacher, D. E., & Meira, F. B. (2019). Sustainability as business strategy in community supported agriculture: Social, environmental and economic benefits for producers and consumers. *British Food Journal (1966)*, 121(2), 616–632.
- Melucci, A. (1994). A Strange Kind of Newness: What's 'New' in New Social Movements. *New social movements: From ideology to identity*, in Larana, E., Johnston, H., & Gusfield, J. R. (eds). *New social movements: From ideology to identity* 101-133. Temple University Press.
- Melucci, A. (2013) "The Process of Collective Identity" in H. Johnston & B. Klandermans (Eds.) *Social movements and culture* (Vol. 4). (41-63) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mert-Cakal, T., & Miele, M. (2022). 'Workable utopias' for social change through inclusion and empowerment? Community supported agriculture (CSA) in Wales as social innovation. In *Social Innovation and Sustainability Transition* (pp. 307-326). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- McAdam, D. (1994). Culture and social movements. *New social movements: From ideology to identity*, 36-57. Temple University Press.
- McGarry, A., & Jasper, J. (Eds.). *The Identity Dilemma: Social Movements and Collective Identity*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Micheletti, M. (2004). Why more women? Issues of gender and political consumerism. *Politics, Products, and Markets: Exploring Political Consumerism*. (pp. 245-264). Transaction Publishers.
- Micheletti, M., Follesdal, A., & Stolle, D. (2009). Introduction: The market as a site of politics. *Politics, Products and Markets: Exploring Political Consumerism Past and Present* (pp. ix–xxvi). Transaction Publishing.

- Miller, J. (2019, September 27). Thousands gather in Ottawa for global climate strike protest. *Ottawa Citizen*. [Link](#)
- Miller, M. (2008). " *Not just about the vegetables*": community supported agriculture and discourses of the local and nature in the Ottawa area (Master's thesis, Carleton University).
- Misleh, D. (2022). Moving beyond the impasse in geographies of 'alternative' food networks. *Progress in Human Geography*, 46(4), 1028-1046.
- Nagra, N. (2003). Whiteness in Seattle: anti-globalization activists examine racism within the movement. *Alternatives Journal*, 29(1), 27+
- Navin, M. (2015). Scaling-Up Alternative Food Networks. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 46(4), 434-448.
- Novick, G. (2008). Is there a bias against telephone interviews in qualitative research?. *Research in nursing & health*, 31(4), 391-398.
- Opitz, I., Zoll, F., Zasada, I., Doernberg, A., Siebert, R., & Piorr, A. (2019). Consumer-producer interactions in community-supported agriculture and their relevance for economic stability of the farm – An empirical study using an Analytic Hierarchy Process. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 68, 22-32.
- Osterweil, M. (2004). Place-based globalists: Rethinking the global in the alternative globalization movement. *Unpublished paper, Department of Anthropology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*.
- Patel, R. (2009). *Stuffed and starved : the hidden battle for the world's food system*. Toronto: Harper Perennial.
- Patton, P. (2010). Activism, philosophy and actuality in Deleuze and Foucault, in Marcelo Svirsky (Ed.) *Deleuze Studies*, 4 (supplement), 84-103.
- Paul, M. (2019). Community-supported agriculture in the United States: Social, ecological, and economic benefits to farming. *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 19(1), 162-180.
- Peck, J., & Tickell, A. (2002). Neoliberalizing Space. *Antipode*, 34(3), 380-404.
- Pedrosa, A. P., & Xerez, R. (2023). Social policy and environment in Brazil: Why does community-supported agriculture matter?. *Global Social Policy* Vol. 23(2) 304-324.
- Pretty, J. (2014). "Saving Our Small Farms and Rural Communities" in J. Mander (Ed.). (pp. 505-530). *The case against the global economy: and for a turn towards localization*. Routledge.

- Pritchard, T. (2019, September 27). Climate protesters make voices heard in Ottawa Tens of thousands converge on Parliament Hill to call for action on climate change. *CBC*. [Link](#).
- Rabinow, P. (Ed.) (1991) *The Foucault Reader*, London, Penguin.
- Raj, G., Feola, G., & Runhaar, H. (2023). Work in progress: power in transformation to postcapitalist work relations in community-supported agriculture. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 1-23.
- Rossi, A., Coscarello, M., & Biolghini, D. (2021). (Re) commoning food and food systems. The contribution of social innovation from solidarity economy. *Agriculture*, 11(6), 548.
- Samoggia, A., Perazzolo, C., Kocsis, P., & Del Prete, M. (2019). Community Supported Agriculture Farmers' Perceptions of Management Benefits and Drawbacks. *Sustainability (Basel, Switzerland)*, 11(12), 3262-3283.
- Sassatelli, R. (2006) 'Virtue, Responsibility and Consumer Choice: Framing Critical Consumerism', in J. Brewer and F. Trentmann (Eds) *Consuming Cultures, Global Perspectives: Historical Trajectories, Transnational Exchanges*. (219–250). Oxford: Berg.
- Satka, M.E., & Skehill, C. (2011). Michel Foucault and Dorothy Smith in case file research: Strange bed-fellows or complementary thinkers?. *Qualitative Social Work*, 11(2), 191-205.
- Savarese, M., Chamberlain, K., & Graffigna, G. (2020). Co-creating value in sustainable and alternative food networks: The case of community supported agriculture in New Zealand. *Sustainability*, 12(3), 1252.
- Schmutz, U., Kneafsey, M., Kay, C. S., Doernberg, A., & Zasada, I. (2017). Sustainability impact assessments of different urban short food supply chains: examples from London, UK. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 33(6), 518-529.
- Sexton, A. E., Garnett, T., & Lorimer, J. (2022). Vegan food geographies and the rise of Big Veganism. *Progress in Human Geography*, 46(2), 605-628.
- Sharzer, G. (2012). *No Local: Why small-scale alternatives won't change the world*. Hants: John Hunt Publishing.
- Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the arts of resistance: Hidden transcripts*. Yale University Press.
- Smith, D. E. (1990a). *Texts, facts and femininity: Exploring the relations of ruling*. London, U.K.: Routledge.

- Smith, D. (1990b). Women's experience as a radical critique of sociology. *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*, 21-24.
- Steup, R., Santhanam, A., Logan, M., Dombrowski, L., & Su, N. M. (2018). Growing tiny publics: Small farmers' social movement strategies. *Proceedings of the ACM on human-computer interaction*, 2(CSCW), 1-24.
- Starr, A. (2004). How can anti-imperialism not be anti-racist? The North American anti-globalization movement. *Journal of world-systems research*, 119-151.
- Starr, A. (2010). Local food: a social movement?. *Cultural Studies? Critical Methodologies*, 10(6), 479-490.
- Starr, J.M. (2001). The Challenges and Rewards of Coalition Building: Pittsburgh's Alliance for Progressive Action. In Bystydzienski, J. M., & Schacht, S. P. (Eds.). *Forging radical alliances across difference: coalition politics for the new millennium* (pp. 107-119). New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Statistics Canada (2017a). A portrait of a 21st century agricultural operation. Catalogue no. 95-640-X. Retrieved from [link](#).
- Statistics Canada (2017b). Growing opportunity through innovation in agriculture. Catalogue no. 95-640-X. Retrieved from [link](#).
- Sutton, D. (2019). The anthropology of cooking in J. A. Klein & J.L. Watson (Eds.). (2019). *The handbook of food and anthropology*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 349-369.
- Swedberg, R. (2014). From theory to theorizing. *Theorizing in social science: The context of discovery*. (1-28) Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Tan, S., & Chen, W. (2019). Can members' WeChat engagement affect relational outcomes in community-supported agriculture? Empirical evidence from China. *Agribusiness (New York, N.Y.)*, 35(1), 36-52.
- Tilly, C., & Tarrow, S. G. (2007). *Contentious politics*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Library. (2023, December 7). **Community Supported Agriculture**. [Link](#).
- Vuilleumier, J. (2017). The involvement of community supported agriculture networks in a Swiss popular initiative for food sovereignty. In *Public Policies for Food Sovereignty*. (103-118) New York: Routledge.
- Wiebe, N., & Wipf, K (2011). Nurturing Food Sovereignty in Canada. In H. Wittman, A. Desmarais, and N. Wiebe (Eds.). *Food sovereignty in Canada: creating just and sustainable food systems*. (1-19) Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.



Wilson, J. (2022). The Accidental Feminist Movement - The Role of Women in Community Supported Agriculture in Southern Ontario [Honours Thesis, University of Waterloo].

White, C. (2023). How Corporations Attempt to Co-opt Buddhism. Yes Magazine. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/opinion/2023/01/24/corporate-buddhism>

Wright, E. O. (2006). Compass points: towards a socialist alternative. *New Left Review*, 41, 93-124.

Yates, L. (2015). Everyday politics, social practices and movement networks: daily life in Barcelona's social centres. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 66(2), 236-258.

Yu, Q., Campbell, B., Liu, Y., & Martin, J. (2019). A Choice Based Experiment of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): A Valuation of Attributes. *Agricultural and Resource Economics Review*, 48(1), 1–20.

Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Intersectionality and feminist politics. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3), 193-209.

**Appendix A  
Interview Guide**

	Farmer	Member
<b>Consent</b>	Good day. Thank you for agreeing to participate. Have you had a chance to read the consent form? Do you have any questions? And do you understand that you can change your mind at any point? Are you ready to begin? Is it ok if I record this interview?	Good day. Thank you for agreeing to participate. Have you had a chance to read the consent form? Do you have any questions? And do you understand that you can change your mind at any point? Are you ready to begin? Is it ok if I record this interview?
<b>Demographic</b>	Could you please provide a little background information? Your name and age? How do you identify? Could you tell me a little about your household? Partner? Children? Do you (or your partner) have an occupation outside of the CSA?	Could you please provide a little background information? Your name and age? How do you identify? Could you tell me a little about your household? Partner? Children? What do you do for a living?
<b>CSA background</b>	You operate (name of CSA)? How long have you operated it? Could you tell me about how you got involved with CSA? How did you choose CSA as a structure? Have you operated other farming models?	You participate in (name of CSA)? How long have you been a member? Have you been a member in any other CSA before? Could you tell me about how you came to choose CSA? How did you choose this CSA?
<b>Practices</b>	<p>Could you walk me through the seasons on the farm? What does a year look like for you? What are your major tasks in the spring? Summer? Autumn? Winter? What tasks are ongoing?</p> <p>What tasks do you do yourself? What tasks do you delegate? What are your favorite tasks? Least favorite?</p> <p>Are there any practices that have changed over the years? Have you changed transportation or a planting technique or marketing? Is there anything that you tried and decided it did not work? Are there any tasks that have changed based on feedback from members?</p> <p>CSA operation requires a lot of lifestyle changes, are there any other lifestyle changes that you've participated in that you feel are related? As an example, sustainable</p>	<p>How did you sign up for CSA? How did you choose your CSA? Who in your household participated in choosing the CSA? How often do you get a box? Do you pick it up or is it delivered? Who picks it up most of the time? How do you get to the pick-up point?</p> <p>Who does most of the cooking in your house? Is the share of cooking different from before you participated in a CSA?</p> <p>What have some of the best boxes been? The worst?</p> <p>Have you tried any new recipes? If you get something in the box that you aren't familiar with, what do you do? Is there anything that you've gotten that you or your family won't eat? Is there anything you wish you'd gotten more of?</p> <p>Do any of your friends participate in a CSA? Do you or they post</p>

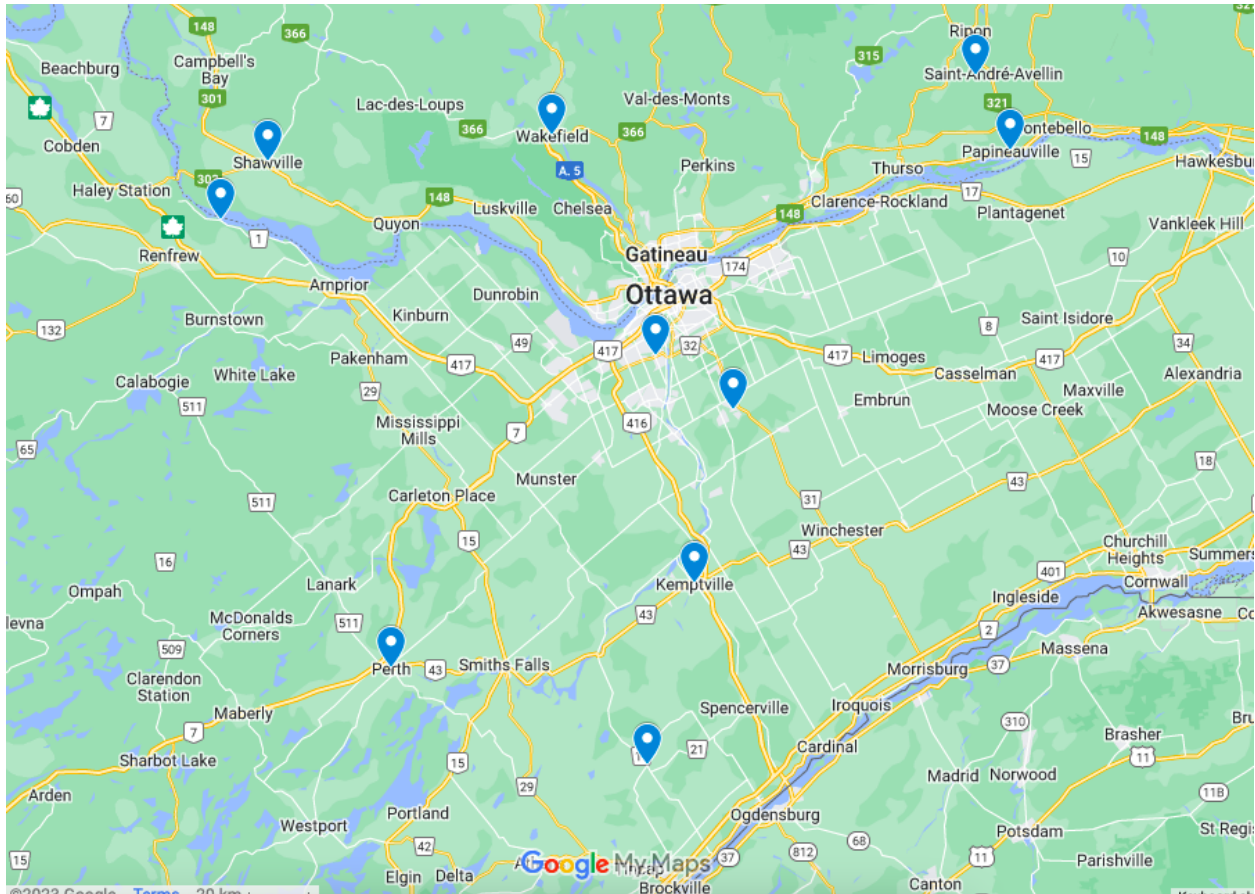
	<p>fashion and shopping secondhand or making your own clothes or zero waste and reducing plastics. Could you tell me a little about any other changes you've made?</p>	<p>online? Do you share recipes? Do you follow the farm on social media? Do you post CSA share day or recipes? Have you met any of the other CSA members in real life? Do you follow any of the other members online?</p> <p>Do you also shop at farmers' markets? Does participating in a share reduce your shopping elsewhere? Where else do you shop?</p> <p>What has been the biggest change about eating/cooking/shopping since you joined a CSA?</p> <p>CSA participation requires a lot of lifestyle changes, are there any other lifestyle changes that you've participated in that you feel are related? As an example, sustainable fashion and shopping secondhand or making your own clothes or zero waste and reducing plastics. Could you tell me a little about any other changes you've made?</p>
<p><b>Intentions/Motivations</b></p>	<p>Can you tell me a little about your motivation for starting a CSA?</p> <p>What personal goals did you have for starting a CSA?</p> <p>What are some other goals that you think CSA accomplish?</p> <p>Do you think there are any health benefits associated with operating a CSA? Environmental benefits? Social benefits?</p> <p>How have your goals for the CSA changed? Were there any that you accomplished easily? Any that were shelved for a later time or dropped entirely? Any new goals this year?</p> <p>What was the biggest surprise for you operating a CSA?</p> <p>Have you shared any of your goals for the CSA with the participants?</p>	<p>Can you tell me a little about your motivation for participating in a CSA?</p> <p>What personal goals did you have for participating in a CSA?</p> <p>What are some other goals that you think CSA accomplish?</p> <p>Do you think there are any health benefits associated with participating in a CSA? Environmental benefits? Social benefits?</p> <p>How have your goals for the CSA changed? Were there any that you accomplished easily? Any that were shelved for a later time or dropped entirely? Any new goals this year?</p> <p>What was the biggest surprise for you participating in a CSA?</p>

		<p>Have you shared any of your ideas about CSA with the operator?</p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p>	<p>You spoke about having (goal mentioned earlier) as a goal, how do you evaluate progress on that? What are some of the challenges (achieving goal mentioned earlier)?</p> <p>What are some other strategies for achieving (goal mentioned earlier)? How does what you are doing compare?</p> <p>What are some things that CSA is effective at accomplishing? What are some things that it is less effective at accomplishing?</p> <p>If money and time were limitless, what would you do differently?</p> <p>Will you operate a CSA next year? Could you tell me a little more about that choice?</p>	<p>You spoke about (goal mentioned earlier) as a goal, how do you evaluate progress on that?</p> <p>What are some of the challenges (achieving goal mentioned earlier)?</p> <p>What are some other strategies for achieving (goal mentioned earlier)? How does what you are doing compare?</p> <p>What are some things that CSA is effective at accomplishing? What are some things that it is less effective at accomplishing?</p> <p>If money and time were limitless, what would you do differently?</p> <p>Will you participate in a CSA next year? Could you tell me a little more about that choice?</p>

**Appendix B  
Farmer Information**

Farmers	Sex	Age	Parental Status	Marital Status	CSA Type	Status	Social Media Usage	Time Operating
F1	Female	37	No kids	Male partner	Meat (pork & beef, formerly vegetables)	Beyond Organic, no certification	High	10 years
F2	Male	35	No kids	Married, Female partner is co-farmer	Vegetables	Certified Organic	High	5 years
F3	Male	64	Grandparent	Unknown	Vegetables, prepared foods, and add-ons (meat sourced off farm)	Certified Organic	Moderate	20 years
F4	Female	62	Kids not at home	Married (Male Partner)	Vegetables and prepared foods	Non-certified organic	Low	9 years
F5	Male	45	Kids	Female Partner is co-farmer	Maple syrup	Ecological	Moderate	5 years
F6	Male	31	No kids	Female Partner	Vegetables	Certified Organic	Moderate	2 years
F7	Male	43	Kids	Female Partner	Vegetables and add-ons (eggs) (meat sourced from other farms)	Non-certified organic,	Moderate	5 years
F8	Female	45	Kids	Married, male partner	Vegetables and beef, chicken, pork, eggs, lamb	Some products organic. Now certified	Moderate	5 years
F9	Female	31	No kids	Unknown	Vegetables and Flowers	Certified Organic	High	1 year
F10	Female	31	No kids	Male Partner is co-farmer	Vegetables and Flowers	Certified Organic	High	2 years

Appendix C  
Farm Location



Source: [Google Maps](#)

A map of the Ottawa Valley with pin drops indicating farms located in Greely, Castleford, Shawville, Kemptville, Wakefield, Nepean, Papineau Regional County Municipality, Perth, Papineauville, and North Augusta.

**Appendix D  
Member Information**

Member	Sex	Age	Parental Status	Marital Status	CSA Type	Social Media	Time (years)	Primary cook M=Male F=Female	Switched or exit CSA
M1	M	37	None	Married	Vegetables, Meat, Honey	High	2	M (F partner)	
M2	F	48	None	Lives alone	Maple Syrup, Vegetables	Moderate	5+	F (Lives alone)	Switched & exit
M3	M	37	Kid	Married	Vegetables, Eggs	Low	6	F (M partner)	Switched
M4	F	25	None	Lives alone	Vegetables	High	1	F (Lives alone)	
M5	F	28	None	Common Law	Vegetables	Moderate	3	50-50 (M-F)	Switched
M6	F	57	Kids	Married	Vegetables	Moderate	10	F 70-30 (M partner)	Switched
M7	F	72	Kids not at home	Lives alone	Vegetables	Low	5+	F (Lives alone)	
M8	F	48	Kids	Married	Vegetables	Low	6-7	F (M partner)	
M9	F	27	None	Lives alone	Vegetables	Low	1	F (lives alone)	
M10	M	41	Kids	Married	Vegetables	Low	2	M (F partner)	
M11	M	32	No kids	Common Law	Vegetables	Low	1	M (F partner)	
M12	F	58	No kids	Lives alone	Vegetables	Low	1	F (lives alone)	
M13	F	31	No kids	Lives alone	Vegetables	Low	2	F (Lives alone)	
M14	F	72	Kids not at home	Married	Vegetables	Low	2	F (M partner)	
M15	M	38	Kids	Married	Vegetables	Unknown	1	50-50 (M-F)	
M16	F	43	No Kids	Married	Vegetables, Meat	Low	3 vegetables 4 meat	F (M Partner)	Exit Vegetables
M17	F	56	Kids	Common Law	Vegetables	Moderate	2	F (M Partner)	
M18	M	63	Kids not at home	Married	Vegetables	Moderate	2	M (F partner)	
M19	F	61	Kids not at home	Married	Vegetables	Moderate	2	M (F partner)	
M20	F	38	Kids	Common Law	Vegetables	Low	1	50-50 (M-F)	
M21	F	56	Kids	Married	Vegetables	None	3-4	F (M partner)	Exit Vegetables

M22	F	42	Kids	Married	Vegetables, Meat, Multiple Direct Sales	None	6	F (M partner)	Multiple farms, exit vegetables
M23	F	42	Kids	Married	Vegetables, Meat, Multiple Direct Sales	Low	8	F (M Partner)	
M24	F	29	No Kids	Roommate	Vegetables, Multi-farm box	Low	3	F (cooks for self)	
M25	F	41	Kids	Married M26	Vegetables, Meat	Low	5 vegetables, 2 meat	M (F Partner, almost 50/50)	Switched
M26	M	44	Kids	Married M25	Vegetables, Meat	Low	5 vegetables, 2 meat	M (F Partner, almost 50/50)	Switched



**Appendix E  
Farmer and Member Information Summary**

	Farmers	Members
Sex	5/10 male 5/10 female	7/26 male 19/26 female
Age	20-29 30-39 = 5 40-49 = 3 50-59 60-69=2 70-79	20-29 = 4 30-39 = 6 40-49 = 8 50-59 = 4 60-69 = 2 70-79 = 2
Parental Status	None = 5 Kids not at home = 2 Kids at home = 3	None = 10 Kids not at home = 4 Kids at home = 12
Marital Status	Lives alone = Roommate(s) = Married/Common Law = 8 Unknown = 2	Lives alone = 6 Roommate(s) = 1 Married/Common Law = 19 Unknown =
CSA Type	Meat = 2 Vegetables = 8 Flowers = 2 Maple Syrup = 1 Flowers = 2 Eggs = 2	Meat = 6 Vegetables = 26 Flowers = Maple Syrup = 1 Flowers = Eggs = 1 Honey = 1 Multi-farm box = 1
Social Media Use	None = Low= 1 Moderate= 5 High= 4 Unknown	None = 2 Low = 15 Moderate = 6 High = 2 Unknown = 1
Years Participating	1 = 1 2 = 2 3 = 4 = 5 = 4 6+ = 3	1 = 6 2 = 7 3 = 4 4 = 5 = 4 6+ = 5
Primary Cook		Cooks for self (lives alone/roommate) = 7 M Cook, F Partner = 5 F Cook, M Partner = 8 Shared (50-50 to 70-30) = 6